GENESIS OF TERRORISM

An Analytical Study of Punjab Terrorists

By

SATYAPAL DANG

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PATRIOT PUBLISHERS
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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the late Shri P. D. S. Sawhney because his short life has a lesson for us all in the context of the Punjab crisis and its ramifications.

Born in a devout Sikh family, "PD", as he was known to his large circle of friends, chose for his life-partner a Hindu girl. Initially there was some resistance from the parents of both of them. However, the two stuck to their decision and married as they were. "PD" remained a full-fledged Sikh and Achila a Hindu. Their parents soon discovered that they could not have desired a better son-in-law/daughter-in-law.

An extremely intelligent person, "PD's" ambition was to make his contribution to the development of industry in India for which he was amply qualified. However, his life was cut short by a tragic accident near Delhi on December 11, 1987 when he was only 37.

He was a sort of an Indira Gandhi fan even though critical of many of her policies.

On October 31, 1984, on his way to his house in Delhi, he stopped his scooter outsides the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences to make anxious enquiries about Indira Gandhi. A group out of the crowd there jeered and insulted him in a manner which would turn any Sikh youth anti-Hindu. But "PD" remained calm, a patriot till the end of his life. Besides his moorings, education and training, was another factor that helped him.

The anti-Sikh riots of November 1984 had started from the area in Delhi in which he was living. Unprovoked, "PD" had remained a totally secular person. A Hindu neighbour had acted to ensure his protection as well as of his wife. He was one of the innumerable Sikhs whose lives had been saved by the Hindus who had kept their cool in those shameful days for India.

The short life of "PD" has thus a lesson for both the Sikhs and the Hindus.

S. D.

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Preface

Various views, often contradictory, had been put forward about the factors responsible for the rise of 'Khalistani' terrorism in Punjab. For long many denied or would not believe that imperialism and its allies who were out to dismember India were aiding and abetting it. There were different views about internal factors. Some argued that poverty and unemployment were the main factors responsible for the phenomenon. It was also asserted that the terrorist-killers ~~were mostly~~ youths from poor families, etc. There were many other views too.

It struck this writer that if some research scholars were to collect bio-data of a fairly large number of terrorist-killers and analyse the same — that would be a useful contribution towards understanding the phenomenon of terrorism in Punjab. It was soon discovered that in the dangerous situation obtaining in the areas from where most terrorists came, it might not be possible for any team of research scholars to undertake this job for quite some time to come. This writer then decided to undertake the job himself to the extent possible with the help of comrades and friends living in the areas and in the villages from which the dreaded terrorist-killers came. The life sketches of the terrorists thus prepared were circulated by the *India Press Agency* (I.P.A.) and appeared in various journals and newspapers, the first in August 1986. All these have been included in this book. Some journalists interviewed some terrorists or gathered from various sources information about the lives of some of them and published them in the papers. These too have been included with due acknowledgement as also some news items which appeared in the press containing useful and relevant information. Cross-checking done by this writer — comparing and sifting information from different sources — revealed only a few minor and inconsequential discrepancies.

The views of some journalists as well as of the S.S.P. Amritsar, Azhar Alam, as reported in the press, about the socio-economic background of the terrorist-killers have also been included for the benefit of the readers. A chart prepared on the basis of the bio-data contained in the material published in this book is also there. The author's views and conclusions based on the bio-data of the terrorists included in the book are there in the chapter entitled, "Some Observations and Conclusions". His comprehensive views are set out in the first chapter entitled, "The Punjab Crisis" — which the readers can test on the basis of the bio-data of the terrorists.

I am grateful to all such comrades and friends who took special pains and even undertook journeys to various villages to collect the information which enabled me to write a large number of life sketches of terrorist-killers. I also thank the research scholar and the political analyst for their contribution.

My thanks are also due to Patriot Publishers and its editorial and production staff for their active cooperation which has made possible the publication of this book.

I hope the book will be found useful by fighters against separatism, terrorism and communalism as well as by research scholars.

January 25, 1988.

SATYAPAL DANG

PART-I

Punjab Terrorism: Socio-Economic and Other Factors

1. The Punjab Crisis

The recent developments in Punjab have shaken the whole country and have attracted worldwide attention. These developments, however, are not altogether isolated from what has been happening in some other parts of India. The main common factor is the imperialist conspiracy against India. There indeed are some factors peculiar to Punjab. To understand the Punjab events it is necessary to examine the common factors as they have operated in Punjab and also factors peculiar to this border state, which have aided and abetted the imperialist conspiracy.

The British imperialists who ruled India till 1947 did all they could to keep Indian people divided and to weaken their unity in the fight for independence. When forced to quit, the British succeeded in dividing India. After India became free the aim of world imperialism, led by US imperialism, has been to weaken and even to dismember India — because India chose the path of independent development, even though on capitalist lines, instead of following the neo-colonial path and because she pursued a progressive foreign policy based on anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and world peace.

As a part of their game of "divide and rule", the British rulers and their spokesmen not only made persistent efforts to plant in the minds of the people the patently false and dangerous concept of our nation being based on religion — of India consisting of separate Hindu, Muslim and Sikh nations, etc, but they also encouraged our people to lay their belief in this concept. This was sought to be done with special vigour ever since the first war of independence of 1857. "There is not and never was an India", proclaimed Sir John Strachey in his *India, Its Administration and Progress*, 1888.[1]

In his essay on Ethno-Nationalism, K R Bomball has pointed out that in Cunningham's famous *History of Sikhs*, written in the early years of the present century, a prominent theme is the growth of Sikhs from "a sect to a people" and from "a people to a nation".[2]

A secret CID memorandum prepared by D Petrie, Assistant Director, Criminal Intelligence, Government of India (1911), says that "every endeavour has been made to preserve them (Sikh soldiers) from the centagion of idolatory". Thanks to these measures, the "Sikhs in the Indian Army have been studiously nationalised", M A Macauliffee, a highly placed British administrator, observed. According to Petrie, this meant that the "Sikhs were encouraged to regard themselves as a totally distinct and separate nation".[3]

The campaign run by some Hindu communal forces to deny the emergence of Sikhism as an independent religion led to a growing fear amongst the Sikh elite that the Sikhs might be absorbed in the Hindu social system and might thus lose their distinct communal (religious) identity. This was taken advantage of by the British to inculcate, encourage and strengthen the false and reactionary concept of an independent political identity of the Sikhs.

The Muslim League led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah had demanded Pakistan on the ground that the (Indian) Muslims constituted a separate nation and therefore should have a separate country.

In 1942, when the Cripps Mission came to India, a section of the Akali leadership demanded the creation of what they called the "Azad Punjab". The "Azad Punjab Scheme" provided for the redemarcation of the Punjab boundaries. The then predominantly Muslim districts were to be separated and merged with the North-West Frontier Province. The remaining districts were to be in the proposed "Azad Punjab" in which neither community were to be in a dominant majority.

In case of India being partitioned, "Azad Punjab" was to be

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1. Quoted by V D Chopra in his *Agony of Punjab*, New Delhi, p. 73.
2. *The Punjab Crisis: Challenge and Response*, Ed. Dr Abida Samiuddin.
3. Ram Swarup, *Concept of Sikh Nation in the Punjab Crisis: Challenge and Response*.

turned into a buffer state between India and Pakistan. The scheme did not get popular Sikh support. Some Akali leaders did not in the beginning rebuff the efforts of Jinnah to get their support for Pakistan (with whole of Punjab going to it). But later on the patriotic Sikh masses forced them to do so.

Thus, notwithstanding all the machinations of the British rulers, an overwhelming majority of the Sikhs did not fall a prey to the British game. They played a glorious role in India's struggle for freedom and made sacrifices of which the country can be rightly proud.

Not satisfied with the division of India into India and Pakistan, the British imperialists tried for further dismemberment of India by empowering the rulers of Indian states, who were notorious British stooges, to decide whether to join India or Pakistan or to become independent.

When the Nizam and his clique, in their efforts to separate the Hyderabad state from India, sought the Security Council intervention, they received prompt support from the United States. American delegate Jessup voted to take up the Nizam's complaint and when the police action was launched, condemned India for its resorting to force. The American press was almost unanimous in attacking India. After the police action, it was learnt that the Nizam's government had employed three former American Army pilots and five DC-35 aircraft.[4]

US Imperialism

These facts[5] together with the well known anti-India role of the US in relation to Kashmir are enough to expose the real attitude of US imperialism towards India's unity and integrity from the very beginning.

The role played by US imperialism and its allies and satellites in encouraging, supporting and helping the separatist demand for 'Khalistan' and the extremist-terrorists working for it is by now too well known. Even then, it may be worthwhile to mention some facts.

The "Sikhs-a-separate-nation" thesis was once again propounded in a big way by Ganga Singh Dhillon at the Sikh educational conference held at Chandigarh on March 14-15, 1981. Dhillon, a wealthy US citizen with links with US ruling circles and admittedly a close friend of Pakistan's Zia, had been invited to preside over the conference. A resolution adopted by the conference sought for the Sikhs associate membership of the United Nations. While no resolution demanding 'Khalistan' was adopted, slogans of "Khalistan Zindabad" were heard at the conference. 'Khalistan' was also propagated by Dr Sohan Singh, former Director, Health Services, Punjab, in his speech at the conference. Even the resolution moved by Dalbir Singh, an industrialist having the reputation of being a moderate, had called upon the Sikhs to "recapture their lost glory" as "the Sikhs are born to rule".

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[4] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 15, 1945.

[5] Reproduced from V D Chopra, *Pentagon Shadow over India*, New Delhi.

Interestingly, at this "educational" conference, a lecturer from Khalsa College, Amritsar, was not allowed to move an official resolution on such a subject as the plight of the college lecturers.[6]

Jagjit Singh Chauhan, a self-proclaimed leader of 'Khalistan' and "President of the National Council of Khalistan", was given an entry visa to the United States in 1982 despite India's strong protests and despite the fact that his passport had been cancelled by the Government of India. He received hospitality and help from some US authorities. He was even received and hailed as "President of Khalistan". It needs also be mentioned that it was Chauhan's "National Council of Khalistan" which issued not only the maps of 'Khalistan' but also the "Khalistan currency", "passports" and "postal stamps" — all with the help of his friends and backers in foreign imperialist circles.

In June or so of 1983, Harry Barnes, the then US Ambassador in India, equated the 'Khalistan' demand with the freedom struggle of the people of Puerto Rico and thus in his own way justified the US support for the same.

Soon after Operation Bluestar, the BBC allowed Jagjit Singh Chauhan to make a broadcast calling for the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

A study commissioned by the US State Department had examined what would have happened in India if Indira Gandhi had died before the parliamentary elections.

"If Indira Gandhi were to die suddenly before the next parliamentary elections, Rajiv's prospects would be considerably more difficult," this study had concluded.

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[6] *Indian Express*, March 16, 1981.

"If she were to die in office after the elections, Rajiv's prospects for succession will be considerably more secure", the State Department had been told.

The findings of this study were received and examined by the US State Department in September 1984. Indira Gandhi was assassinated on October 31, within eight weeks.

The contract for this study was given by the American Government to Robert L Hardgrave Jr, Professor at the University of Texas in Austin. He was guided by Edward G Griffin of the US State Department. Griffin, formerly with the US Army, was a CIA official and is listed in "Who's Who in CIA".

To these facts[7] it needs to be added that the chosen assassins of Indira Gandhi belonged to the Sikh community. The whole thing seemed planned devilishly not only to assassinate the then Prime Minister but also to lead to large-scale Hindu-Sikh riots strengthening the forces of separatism.

A notorious terrorist, Talwinder Singh, had escaped to West Germany. He was wanted in India for some specific murder cases. Extradition proceedings had been initiated and were going on in the appropriate court in West Germany. When it became clear that he would have to be handed over to India, he was allowed to leave West Germany for Canada where he was given shelter.

At one stage the existence of camps in US and Canada to train terrorists, including those who would operate in Punjab, got much exposed — thanks to some enterprising journalists. One such camp in the US was being run by one Frank Camper who admitted having trained a number of "Khalistani terrorists". No longer in a position to deny the existence of such camps, the Governments of these countries pleaded their "helplessness" to close them.

The Pakistan Government's denial of existence of camps in Pakistan to train "Khalistani terrorists" is no longer taken seriously by anyone. In fact, the revelations made by the captured terrorists with concrete details have made such denials look absolutely ridiculous. This writer can be proud of the fact that he was one of the first to expose the existence of such camps through an article in New Delhi's *Link* Newsmagazine. This was in the beginning of

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7. *Link* Newsmagazine, December 23, 1984.

1984. The writer got information about such camps from a friend who had visited Pakistan.

Significantly, an international Hindu conference in New York in July 1984 organised by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad too received the support of some US authorities. The real force behind this organisation, RSS, stands for a Hindu Rashtra in India and considers the Hindus a nation.

It does not have to be proved now that:

(a) the authorities of the Coupland Plan and their patrons are not satisfied even today with India's partition into India and Pakistan only;

(b) the US imperialism is making all possible efforts to force India to toe its line or face dismemberment. Support for the "Khalistan" slogan and terrorism is a part of this endeavour. So also the support to Hindu chauvinists.

These have been self-evident truths for quite some time now. Even then it would be worthwhile to make a brief reference to some recent facts which further support the above contentions.

Some leaders of the US-based World Sikh Organisation (WSO) were asked as to why they were campaigning in favour of continuation of military aid to Pakistan even when it had been established that Pakistan had already made or almost made a nuclear bomb. Their reply was that they were US citizens and they were seeking to serve the interests of the US. Actually, they were serving the interests of US imperialism. These WSO leaders are known to be supporters of 'Khalistan' also. Whether they admit it or not, they are serving the same US imperialism thereby.

On October 7, 1987, the five-member "Panthic Committee" — which claims to head most if not all the terrorist organisations in Punjab — announced the formation of the "Council of Khalistan". A majority of its members are foreign citizens and belong to the same category to which the above-referred to leaders of the WSO belong.

On November 1, 1987, the Amritsar police arrested one Balkar Singh, a Canadian citizen, who had recently come to Punjab on the pretext of visiting some ailing relative of his in Amritsar district. However, he hardly visited his native village. He was arrested from a very posh public sector hotel in Amritsar — on a tip off from a man connected with intelligence. He carried on him the name and telephone number of a professor of a local college, besides others.

He had also brought with him a letter for this professor from Dr Arjinder Singh, a member of the "Council of Khalistan". The letter, it is reported, had asked the professor to arrange a meeting between Balkar Singh and Sukha Sipahi ("General" Labh Singh), one of the top terrorists of Amritsar district. It has also been reported that before his arrest, Balkar Singh had distributed about Rs 38 lakhs to various terrorist organisations.

According to some newspapers, the amount had been collected by Balkar Singh from various businessmen in India, including those in Punjab. That however does not reveal the entire truth. The rupees were possibly collected in India but in non-official and illegal exchange for amounts paid in foreign currency to the relatives of these businessmen in foreign countries.

According to the Superintendent of Police (Detective), Rajinder Singh, Balkar Singh had come here to "guide and finance" the "Panthic Committee", in addition to arranging arms for the terrorists.

His links with a Pakistani national, Chaudhri Liaqat Ali of Gujranwala, had been established. Rajinder Singh also said, that before his arrest Balkar Singh had met Avtar Singh Brahma, Kuldip Singh Muchhal, Gurbachan Singh Manochahal and Labh Singh (all top terrorists) and had given them Rs 38 lakhs.

To protest against the "alleged maltreatment" of this Canadian citizen by the Punjab police, Canadian External Affairs Minister Joe Clark summoned the Indian High Commissioner. Earlier, a Canadian diplomat in Delhi had delivered a protest note to the External Affairs Ministry in Delhi over certain allegations of "torture" of Balkar Singh.

These facts are from a report from Ottawa.[8] The same report contains the following:

"Asked how Canada-viewed the activities of some of its nationals who reportedly used the country as a base for launching terrorist operations in India, Georges Riou, an External Affairs Ministry spokesman, refused to comment."

On November 29, 1987, Channel 1 of the BBC, under the "Everyman" series, devoted to the propogation of religion, featured a 45-minute programme entitled, "The Turban and the Sword."[9] The programme gave "a further boost" to the "rising militant tendencies among the Sikh youth in the UK and to the demand of a separate state". Devotional singers, says the report, were projected singing songs, praising, not the 10 Gurus, but the slain Bhindranwale and his nephew, Jasbir Singh, now in detention in India. The report ends by pointing out that diplomatic observers in London feel "the programme was aimed at deepening the wounds of the Sikh community. It was felt that it was more tilted in favour of separatism than in favour of those who stood for unity and integrity".

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[8] The *Tribune*, December 6, 1987, date lined Ottawa, December 5, (MNS).

On December 12, 1987 it was reported[10] that the US House of Representatives had adopted a resolution calling upon the Government of India to open the Golden Temple for worship and to respect the "human rights" of the Sikhs in Punjab. Lying in the face of facts and presenting a totally distorted picture of reality, the resolution was obviously intended to raise the sagging morale of the terrorists.

It is unnecessary to give more examples.

India is fully reconciled to the establishment of a separate Pakistan and wishes its people well. At the same time, vital interests of the Indian people demand that the game of disintegrating India is defeated. National unity and integrity of India must be maintained. That is the call of patriotism today. The future of Indian revolution too is linked with that. Disintegration of India will be a serious setback to the world revolutionary process as well. In defending the unity and integrity of India, people of Punjab — both Hindus and Sikhs — have a vital role to play. There is no doubt that they will play this role with credit. Our confidence is based on facts like the following:

Majority Against 'Khalistan'

A big majority of Sikhs in Punjab have refused to support the demand for 'Khalistan'. Whatever support the demand was able to gather has already started declining. The Hindu communal thesis that the entire Sikh community is responsible for the misdeeds of the terrorists and their slogans of "revenge" etc. have not evoked the response their authors had expected.

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[9] *Indian Express*, quoting a PTI Report, December 2, 1987.

[10] *Times of India*, December 12, 1987,

All efforts to provoke Hindu-Sikh riots in Punjab on a large scale have failed. Thousands and thousands of Sikhs and Hindus have jointly demonstrated in Punjab and in Delhi for communal peace, for unity of India, and against "Hindu Raj" as well as 'Khalistan'. The Left in Punjab has played a significant role in this.

At the same time it would be wrong to overlook the factors which have played a negative role and the negative features of the present situation. And these must be studied historically.

The British did all they could to divide Hindus and Muslims and to bring about Hindu-Muslim riots. This however did not exhaust the contents of their 'divide and rule' policy. British India's division into provinces had not been done on geographical, historical, economic or linguistic basis. This division was done with a view to following the policy of 'divide and rule'. The Madras Presidency, for instance, included the Tamil speaking as well as the Telugu speaking people. The Bombay Presidency included the Marathi speaking as well as the Gujarati speaking people. At the same time, many Gujarati speaking people lived in different Princely states. The pre-Independence Punjab province included the Punjabi speaking people as well as the Hindi or Haryanavi and Bagri speaking people. There were also a number of Princely states like Patiala, Nabha etc. which were inhabited by the Punjabi speaking people. And these are not the only instances of the type.

Secondly, in the country as a whole the British rulers allowed the respective language of the people to be the medium of instruction at least at the primary stage and also to be the language of the administration below the district level. In the case of Punjab, however, even this was not done. Nowhere in Punjab, Punjabi was made the medium of instruction even in (government) primary schools. Nor was it made the language of administration at any level. The British obviously wanted to exploit certain historical factors prevailing in Punjab for furtherance of their policy of 'divide and rule'. And it did contribute to the language question in Punjab getting mixed up with religion and communalism.

As a part of its efforts to defeat the British game of 'divide and rule', the Indian National Congress made a firm commitment to reorganise the then provinces on linguistic basis. After India won her freedom and the Congress had become the ruling party, it tried to go back on this commitment. The reorganisation of Indian states on linguistic basis came only after bitter struggles. Except in the case of Punjab, these were united struggles. These had achieved success by 1956 or so.

In Punjab the Akali Party led by Master Tara Singh came out with the demand for a *Sikh Suba*. Later on it was modified to a "Punjabi speaking province in which Sikhs should be at least 60 per cent of the population." The Punjabi language — mother tongue of all the Punjabis (Sikhs and Hindus) — was talked about as if it was a part of the Sikh religion. The Hindu communalists, on the other hand, made the false assertion that Hindi and not Punjabi was their mother tongue. They too had made it a religious issue. Hindus were called upon to get Hindi so recorded during the census operation. Many (Hindus) Congress leaders too took this position. They would not consider the adoption of Punjabi as the official language, even with the option to use the *Devnagri* script besides its natural *Gurmukhi* script. Against the demand for a Sikh majority *Punjabi Suba,* a demand for *Maha Punjab* (in which Sikhs would be a microscopic minority) was also advanced.

In this way, in Punjab the issue of language and of the formation of a Punjabi speaking state assumed heavy communal overtones. In relation to these questions, Punjabis got communally divided. This enabled the ruling party to delay the reorganisation of Punjab on linguistic basis much longer than in the case of Andhra or Maharashtra, etc.

Sant Fateh Singh was encouraged to come into politics by Congress Chief Minister Sardar Partap Singh Kairon. The idea was to weaken and even split the Akali Party. Sant Fateh Singh took progressive stands on many issues. For instance, he demanded the state take over of the wholesale trade in food grains as well as nationalisation of banks. He was a firm supporter of India's foreign policy of non-alignment. He took the firm position that he wanted a *Punjabi Suba* comprising all Punjabi speaking areas and was not bothered as to which religious community constituted what percentage of the total population of this province/state. He also declared that he would not demand any more powers for Punjab than what they were for the other Indian states. He campaigned on this basis. This brought about many healthy changes in the politics of Punjab of those days. The communists consistent with their own stand lent their full support.

The Hindi speaking people of the Haryana region of the then Punjab (overwhelming majority Hindus) now began pressing for a separate Haryana state. Active opposition from the Punjabi-speaking Hindus to the formation of a *Punjabi Suba* began to go down. In the process, Sant Fateh Singh emerged as the unchallenged leader of the Akali Party in his own right and could not be called to order even by those who originally brought him into politics.

The demand for a Punjabi speaking state had to be conceded and the present states of Punjab and Haryana came into existence in November 1966. The Akalis were in power in this Punjab in 1967, in 1969-71 and in 1979-80. On the first two occasions, their government fell because of defections, internal quarrels actively encouraged by the Congress and the Government of India. The third time, the Akali Government was dismissed by the Congress(I) Government at the Centre along with many other non-Congress state governments just as many Congress state governments had been earlier dismissed in 1977 by the Janata Party Government of India of which the Akali Party too was a party.

Unjust Reorganisation

The reorganisation of Punjab in November 1966 was not entirely just. Chandigarh was made a Union territory. Many Punjabi speaking villages and even areas went to Haryana while many Hindi speaking villages and areas came to Punjab. This was the result of the tehsil and not the village being made the basis of division and also because large sections of Hindus had got recorded Hindi as their mother tongue. Had Sant Fateh Singh stood for complete separation of religion from politics and had not run his morchas from within the Golden Temple, the situation in these respects too might have been much less unsatisfactory.

In 1971, Sant Fateh Singh launched a morcha for the inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab. He went on fast unto death. On the basis of a behind-the-scene agreement suggested by the Akali leadership itself or its emissaries, Indira Gandhi awarded Chandigarh to Punjab while Abohar and Fazilka with a corridor through one village were awarded to Haryana. The rest of the territorial dispute was to go to a commission. The award was welcomed by the then

Akali Chief Minister Gurnam Singh. However, there was very adverse and strong reaction against it in Punjab and the Akalis went back on it. It was never implemented.

When India's partition took place in 1947, all the water of the Ravi and Beas rivers was not being utilized. As these rivers flowed into Pakistan's Punjab too, Pakistan rightly claimed its share. India wanted this entire water on the ground that it was needed not only for Punjab but also for Rajasthan. An agreement between the then Punjab and Rajasthan fixing their shares was arrived at in 1955. Later on, with the help of the World Bank, Pakistan was persuaded to give up its claim in return of Rs. 100 crores paid to it by the Government of India. Till 1982, no one ever raised any dispute about all this. The dispute arose about the division of the erstwhile Punjab's share amongst the present Punjab and Haryana when a separate Haryana state was formed. While this dispute has not yet been resolved, it was only in 1982 and thereafter that the Akali Party leaders began questioning the right of Rajasthan and some times even of Haryana to any water.

The principle of riparian states was invoked in support of the assertion that neither Haryana nor Rajasthan could claim even a drop of water of these rivers — because they nowhere touched the boundaries of these states. The principle of riparian states is applicable under international law to different, separate countries. It cannot be applied to different states of one country which is developing a common economy.

As already stated, the Akalis were in power in Punjab from 1977 to 1980 (for nearly three years). In this period, they also shared power at the Centre. It is true that they did nothing to settle these disputes or the "Punjab demands" as they have come to be known. Some times, the Akali leaders try to refute this by pointing out that they did go to the Supreme Court regarding the water disputes. The fact is that it is Haryana that went to the Supreme Court first for the implementation of the Government of India's decision in this matter, taken during the emergency period. The Akali Government had filed a counter case. Those cases were withdrawn after Indira Gandhi had brought about a new agreement between the Chief Ministers of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan—all of the Congress (I).

This agreement undid only some of the injustices done to Punjab by the earlier decision of the Government of India. For some days the Akalis did not raise any objection. The fact remained that the opposition had not been consulted. Subsequently it became a major dispute. It was clearly wrong not to consult the opposition. Events have also proved that it would have been better to let the Supreme Court decide the matter.

Rich Peasants, Capitalist Landlords

As is well known the Green Revolution strategy has been highly successful in Punjab for historical reasons. The biggest beneficiaries of this revolution have been the upper sections of land-owners. A powerful class of rich peasants and capitalist landloards has arisen in Punjab. This class has made big amounts of money and has grown quite rich. It wants avenues for investment. After a particular stage, agriculture no longer yielded as much as it did earlier. Adequate attention to development of industry in Punjab was not given at the proper time even when it had become urgently necessary from the viewpoint of agriculture itself and also from the viewpoint of the existing small scale industry. The resulting situation gave rise to a number of demands and problems.

There has been, for instance, the demand for greater industrial development of Punjab, demand for big industries and, above-all, demand for agro-industries. The Akali leaders have been saying, "when we produce agricultural goods why should we not have the right to sell them as the highest available price, in the international market? Why should we be forced to sell our produce to the Government of India at the price fixed by it for deficit Indian states?" Clearly this is a demand for profiteering prices as distinct from the very justified demand of the peasantry for remunerative prices.

Towards their economic aims, the landlords and the *kulaks* have been demanding greater share in the state power. They are already a dominant force in the economy of the state. They want to be the dominant force in the power structure of the state. They want to rule the state and they want Punjab under their rule to have more powers than it has at present. Some have developed all-India interests including industrial interests. They have a "moderate" outlook. Others go to the extent of wanting the Centre to be very weak. And there are also such elements who dream of an independent Punjab.

Obviously, only such of their demands as are consistent with the interest of the people and the country can be supported. For instance, more industry for Punjab — Yes. More powers for the states — Yes. Only four departments for the Centre — No.

By religion, a big majority of the Punjab peasants and landlords is Sikhs. Politically, a small section of it has been with the Congress. The rest has been with the Akali Party. In fact, the Akali Party leadership is in the hands of the rural rich, the *kulaks* and the landlords. A big majority of the Punjab peasantry too is Sikh by religion. By caste they are Jats while most of the agricultural labourers belong to the Scheduled Castes.

The caste and the religion factors help the Akali leadership to rally behind them also the middle and the poor peasants and other Sikhs. That is why they put forward even their non-religious demands as the demands of the Sikhs. They allege that the Centre discriminates against Punjab because Punjab's majority is that of the Sikhs; that their demands are not being accepted because the Sikhs are treated as second class citizens, etc. They run their *morchas* from gurdwaras and to justify that, they stick to the theory that for the Sikhs religion and politics are inseparable. Those who want to go to the extreme take their stand on the thesis: the "Sikhs — a separate nation" and the "Sikhs must have separate political identity" (and not only religious identity) and demand "Khalistan". It is also argued by some that the British conquered Punjab from a Sikh ruler and the Sikhs must rule Punjab again.

The conflict of interests between the established Hindu trading classes and the growing Sikh trading classes too assumes communal colourings. This has made its own contribution to the Punjab problem.

As already stated, the demand for "Khalistan", is encouraged, supported and helped by imperialism out to destablise and disintegrate India. The Akali Party has never demanded 'Khalistan' by any resolution. It has even opposed it. However, it cannot be said that all Akali leaders have the same attitude. It is to be noted that the Akali Party as a whole has taken certain positions which provide grist to the mill of separatism e.g. the thesis: "Sikhs-a-separate-nation."

The discontentment of the people which is the direct result of the anti-people economic policies of the Government of India resulting in growing disparties, growing unemployment, growing atrocities on weaker sections, growing corruption, etc. too helps the divisive forces. The educated youths coming from rich and middle peasant families of Punjab do not find avenues and opportunities desired by them.

Anandpur Saheb Resolution

What has been said in the preceding paras should help to understand the real meaning of the much talked about Anandpur Saheb resolution.

There are many versions of the resolution. We can leave out the one which is claimed to be the real one by the Talwandi faction of the Akali Party.

The original one was adopted in 1973 at Gurdwara Anandpur Saheb in the town of Anandpur by the working committee of the Akali Party.

It was stated in the introduction of the resolution that the English translation[11] was by Amar Singh Ambalvi who was also a member of the 12-member sub-committee which had been constituted by the working committee to formulate comprehensive policies and programmes of the Akali Party. The introduction had also stated that notwithstanding sharp differences at many meetings, the final report was adopted unanimously.

A slightly different version appeared in the press[12] on December 13, 1982. This was said to be the full text of the English version of the political goal resolution adopted by the working committee of the Dal on October 16-17, 1973 at Anandpur Saheb.

There is another version — the one which was signed by the late Sant Longowal and given to Inder Kumar Gujral. There is yet another version which appeared in the White Paper issued by the Government of India in July 1984. This was supplied to the Government by the Akali leadership.

Then there is the resolution adopted by the general house of the Akali Party in 1978 at Ludhiana. This only demanded more powers for the states. However, it makes clear that it was adopted "in the light of the Anandpur Saheb resolution."

Anyway, those who swear by the Anandpur Saheb resolution make it clear that they mean the original 1973 one.

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[11] *The Tribune*, (English translation) April 13, 1981.

[12] *The Tribune*, December 13, 1982.

All versions of the resolution contain certain religious as well as economic demands. Some of the latter are the real demands of the rural rich. Others are for catching votes. We need not go into all these because the essence of the Anandpur Saheb resolution lies somewhere else.

Notwithstanding some differences in the different versions of the 1973 resolution, they have the following common features:

(1) They are based on the thesis that Sikhs are not only an independent religious community (which they undoubtedly are) but are also an independent and separte political identity — which they are not.

(2) All concede only four departments to the Centre. These are: Communication, Currency, Defence and Foreign Affairs. (This means good-bye to common economy. The has not conceded power even to raise finances necessary to run these departments. The Centre will have to ask for contributions from the states — presumably in proportion to their representation in Parliament. This is made explicit in one of the versions).

(3) The political aim in every version is defined as 'Khalsa Ji Ka Bol Bala'. This is nothing but a demand for a theocratic Punjab. If it materialises, it will mean not the rule of the Sikhs but of the Sikh vested interests, especially of the rural rich.

Of course, the extravagant claims on the territories of the neighbouring states are there in all the versions.

(4) In all the versions there is an attack on India's foreign policy of nonalignment from a pro-imperialist angle.

(5) In all the versions, there is the false claim that the Akali Party is the sole representative of the Sikhs.

The resolution does not spell out how 'Khalsa Ji Ka-Bol-Bala' will be ensured because the one-person-one-vote system may not guarantee that. Some of the Akali leaders have aired their views in this connection.

Not very long ago, G S Tohra came out with the theory that those not having immovable property in Punjab should not have the right to vote.

Narinder Singh Bhullar, once a dictator of the *Punjabi Suba morcha* and later on a great admirer of Bhindranwale, has been propagating the theory of separate electorates.

There is no doubt that the demand for the acceptance of the Anandpur resolution is the demand for 'Khalistan' within India.

but with a very weak Centre, and its acceptance can only prove a big step towards a sovereign 'Khalistan'.

Notwithstanding all this, it needs to be stated that during the elections to Parliament, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi overplayed the Anandpur resolution card obviously for electoral gains.

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

Let us now briefly deal with the phenomenon of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

This Sant too was brought into politics by the Congress(I). During the 1978 election to the Shrimoni Gurdwara Parbhandhak Committee (SGPC) his candidates were supported by the Congress. During the 1980 Lok Sabha elections, the Sant supported Congress (I) candidates Gurdial Singh Dhillon and Raghunandan Bhatia. The Congress (I) — at least one faction of it — continued to nurture and support Bhindranwale even after he openly called for the murder of the Nirankari Baba, Lala Jagat Narain, etc, The game obviously was to split/weaken the Akali Party — as yet the only rival in its bid to rule Punjab. The game was not given up even after the Sant began organising large-scale terrorism and making serious efforts to bring about the Hindu-Sikh riots. The Akalis too played the game of using him against the Congress (I) and the Government of India.

It is not for nothing that Bhindranwale was allowed to live first in the Guru Nanak Niwas and then in the Akal Takht. From within the Golden Temple, killing of the Hindus was preached by him. There itself the killer squads were trained and given shelter. The Golden Temple complex was converted into an arsenal with highly sophisticated weapons and lot of ammunition. Tohra and Longowal went on denying that any such thing was happening in the Golden Temple complex. Parkash Singh Badal followed the principle: "Silence is golden".

The Akali leadership had obviously wanted to use him as a card against the government to be able to dictate its terms. It was not for nothing that at quite an early stage the Akali leadership had demanded his release as a pre-condition to negotiations with the government.

Longowal went to the extent of justifying the killings of the Nirankaris. He would deplore killing of the Hindus but would blame the Congress (I) for providing an *alibi* for Bhindranwale men. Rebutting the charge that he was a Congress agent, Bhindranwale once asserted that it was in fact he who had used the Congress and not *vice versa*. He could have also made the same claim with regard to the Akalis.

Bhindranwale built his cells within the administration. His influence increased. Administration became more and more paralysed. Bhindranwale's became a parallel government and thereafter the only government in Punjab. Even highly confidential decisions taken by the Governor-in-Council were reported to reach him pretty quickly. His men could kill any one at his bidding and get away with it. Many began to believe that he was all powerful, almost an *Avtar*.

His men fell into two categories: (a) youngmen indoctrinated by ideological poison, attracted also by appeal of arms and with plenty of money; and (b) smugglers and other anti-social elements. They served him in more than one way and also used the position and power he came to acquire for their own ends. Smugglers in Punjab have been wielding considerable influence over bourgeois politicians. Many of them had supported the Congress as well as the Akali Party — even simultaneously. They had, it seems, developed ambitions to directly share power in the state. In any case, Bhindranwale had tried to use them. They in their turn tried to use him.

Towards the end of his career, Bhindranwale had gone completely out of control of the Congress as well as of the Akalis. Quite a few of the Akali leaders even feared death at the hands of his men.

It is no use speculating as to what extent Bhindranwale was directly linked with the US and the military rulers of Pakistan. There is however no doubt that he and his terrorists were playing their game of dismemberment of India and were being helped by them.

It needs to be mentioned that the Hindu communalists who held the entire Sikh community responsible for the misdeeds of the extremists only helped the latter. Similar role was played on more than one occasion by the then Haryana Chief Minister Bhajan Lal. Only one instance need be given. The Akali threat to disrupt the Asiad games in New Delhi deserved to be condemned and had to be met firmly and tactfully. But the way in which the ordinary Sikh passengers as also top dignitaries travelling to Delhi were humiliated by the Haryana police was a tremendous help to Bhindranwale and the Sikh communalists. At one stage Bhajan Lal had started acting on the theory of "teaching the Sikhs a lesson".

The Bluestar operation of the Army, when it took place, had become a painful necessity. It dealt a blow to the imperialist conspiracy to dismember India through another partition. At the same time, it created new problems. It deeply hurt the Sikh religious sentiments. It made the ground more fertile for separatists.

Could it not have been avoided? This therefore is an important question. Our opinion is that the situation necessitating the Bluestar operation could and should have been avoided.

First, when DIG Atwal was shot dead from within the Golden Temple complex, Bhindranwale was in Guru Nanak Niwas which really is not a part of the complex. He had not yet shifted to the Akal Takht. Security forces could have entered the Guru Nanak Niwas at that time and taken decisive action to smash the terrorist organisation. The failure of the Government to act at that time surprised everyone, including the Sikhs, and demoralised the police force still further.

Secondly — and this is more important — had a political settlement been reached on the 'Punjab demands' at the proper time, the moderate Akali leaders in all probability would have cooperated to throw out of the Golden Temple complex Bhindranwale and his men. In any case they would have been isolated and it would have been easier to deal with them without any operation like the Bluestar one.

The fact that the Congress(I) and its Government, the Akali Party and other bourgeois parties gave the first place to their narrow electoral and other partisan interests was the main factor which hindered and prevented a political solution. Had these parties given the first place to the interests of the nation, it would not have been difficult to find a solution keeping in view the interests of national integration, doing justice to Punjab without doing injustice to Haryana and Rajasthan and acting in a spirit of give and take.

Important Controversies

For its failure, the ruling party has of course to bear a greater responsibility. Much has already been written about this matter. We here need deal only with the important controversies.

The opposition parties allege that three times an agreement had almost been arrived at but each time it was prevented by the late Prime Minister. The allegation had not been refuted convincingly. The late Prime Minister alleged that settlement was prevented by the Akali refusal to give up the Anandpur Saheb resolution. This at best is half truth. The Akalis had insisted that in the terms of reference of the commission to go into Centre-State relations, mention be made of this resolution. The Government as well as the entire opposition opposed this and the Akalis at last agreed to drop this demand. It is another matter that from Manji Saheb Sant Longowal had declared that the (original) Anandpur Saheb resolution remained their final aim. But this was not the cause of the last-minute breakdown on either of the occasions.

The late Prime Minister's charge that the Akalis kept on shifting their position is not altogether wrong. For instance, the dispute about surplus waters was really about the shares of Haryana and Punjab. Suddenly the Akalis wanted even the 1955 agreement fixing Rajasthan's share to be re-opened. But the opposition opposed them and they had to retreat. Also, they raised an altogether new demand for amending Article 25 of the Constitution. This the Government had almost conceded and quite readily too as if it had been raised by mutual arrangement. There may be some other instances too but it does not seem that they proved to be the cause of the breakdown.

Of course, it seem true that a stage had reached when the Akali leadership would not dare to arrive at any settlement that had not the support of Bhindranwale. And Bhindranwale would not agree to anything less than the Anandpur resolution.

The Army action of course greatly injured the religious sentiments of the Sikhs and in a way helped the separatists. At the same time, note has to be taken of the fact that much before the Bluestar operation sections of the urban middle classes, intellectuals and youths had come to believe that Bhindranwale was invincible and that he would, in any case, get 'Khalistan'. Some such persons would gleefully ask, "What is the score today (i.e. how many have been killed today)"? Bungalows, houses and even mills and business premises of the Hindus had been "allotted" by Bhindranwale and his men. This writer knows of instances of even school children talking about such "allotment". Those who had thus been attuned to "Khalistan" coming into existence were more angry when they heard that Bhindranwale had been shot dead than even at the entry of the Army in the Golden Temple premises. They felt frustrated.

A big majority of the Sikhs was not for 'Khalistan' but the Bluestar operation injured the Sikhs' religious sentiments too. It widened the gap between the Hindus and the Sikhs. But it is also a fact that it had led to some heart-searching amongst some sections of them. The question began being asked: Why was Bhindranwale not prevented from doing what he actually did in the Golden Temple?"

There is also the fact that the Sikh agricultural labourers and the class conscious organised Sikh industrial workers had been not only against Bhindranwale but also the Akalis. They even supported the Bluestar operation as a painful necessity. There are others who take more or less the same position, as for example, the Radha Swami Sikhs, the Nirankari Sikhs, etc. There are also Sikh supporters of the Left, the Congress (I) etc. even amongst the peasants.

The Sikh agricultural labourers belong to the Scheduled Castes. They constitute nearly 20 per cent of the Sikh population of Punjab. The landed gentry does not regard them as Sikhs but there is no reason for others to lose sight of the fact that this section of the Sikhs is firmly opposed to the demand for 'Khalistan'.

Even amongst the land-owning Sikh peasantry the pitch of anger and feeling of hurt was not the same in all the districts and even in its different layers in one and the same district. The fact that Bhindranwale's call issued on June 2, 1984 to kill the Hindus everywhere was ignored except only here and there, was also significant.

Indira Gandhi's Assassination

The dastardly assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984 was clearly a part of the imperialist game. Proofs of this contention were available in the US press itself. One "expectation" was that it would lead to large-scale Hindu-Sikh riots. The most shameful anti-Sikh riots that took place in the first few days of November 1984 in Delhi, Kanpur and some other places must have gladdened the hearts of India's enemies. The fact that some Sikhs celebrated Indira Gandhi's assassination deserved condemnation but that could never be a justification for anti-Sikh riots. In many cases the police connived and even encouraged these incidents. The most unfortunate fact was that even some Congress(I) leaders and workers whose duty it should have been to give correct guidance to people in those difficult days did just the opposite.

This is not to deny that some Congressmen did play a positive role too and tried to save the Sikhs who were sought to be attacked. It needs also to be stated that after some initial vaccilations, Rajiv Gandhi did act firmly to stop the riots. Even then, in some respect, the anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, Kanpur etc. caused greater harm to the cause of Hindu-Sikh unity than anything else.

As has already been stated, during the elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajiv Gandhi used the Anandpur Saheb resolution card as his main plank and overplayed it. After the elections, however, he took many steps, one after the other, to resolve the Punjab problem and to restore normalcy. These included the release of the Akali leaders, secret negotiations with them, a firm public assurance about early construction of the Thein Dam, promise of a coach factory, etc.

Rajiv-Longowal Accord

The late Sant Harchand Singh Longowal who had adopted a very belligerent attitude immediately after his release soon began speaking in a very welcome tone. And then came the Rajiv-Longowal accord. It was widely welcomed. The entire country heaved a sigh of relief. Sant Longowal was praised for the courage he displayed by signing the accord. He could not but know that thereby he would be on the top of the hit list of the separatist-terrorists. And he did pay with his life for his correct and courageous act. Rajiv Gandhi and the then Punjab Governor Arjun Singh too were praised. At the same time it needs to be noted that it was the failure of the strategy to bring about Hindi-Sikh riots in Punjab as also in the rest of the country resulting in mass migration out of and into Punjab and the widespread desire and growing demand for normalcy on the part of the people which made possible the accord. There were of course some other factors also.

The communists too welcomed the accord whole-heartedly.

They pointed out that it could become a big weapon for completely isolating the terrorists and separatists. They also made the point that it would not mean an automatic end to and complete elimination of terrorism. They stated that imperialism would not give up its effort to destabilise India and there were factors in the internal situation to help it.

Recent events have proved all this to be entirely correct. It soon became clear that terrorists though weakened had not been isolated. The high vote polled by Bimal Khalsa, widow of one of the assassins of Indira Gandhi, in two constituencies in the May 1985 elections to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha proved that the failure of the call to boycott the elections could not be interpreted to mean the equally strong rejection of the extremism.

In his pamphlet, dated October 4, 1985, the already referred to Narinder Singh Bhullar clearly stated that the Sikh youths would either kill the traitors or get themselves killed. He openly denounced the slogan of the Hindu-Sikh unity and characterised it as contrary to the teachings of the Gurus.

The communists also stated that the implementation of the accord could not be taken for granted and that this would have to be fought for. Unfortunately, this too has proved to be correct. Some of the facts which show this are as under:

(a) Some important leaders of the Akali Party have been opposing openly or in actual practice the accord, for purely factional reasons. While some want to sincerely implement it, there are others who regard it as a stage for reaching the final goal — the Anandpur resolution acceptance.

(b) The initial reaction of the Congress (I) Chief Ministers of Haryana and Rajasthan was to oppose the accord. They were pulled up. But then the bourgeois opposition parties in Haryana took upon themselves to do whatever they could to sabotage it, even when their counterparts in Punjab were supporting it.

(c) It is possible to argue that the territorial dispute between Punjab and Haryana for historical reasons had become so complicated that to resolve it "other relevant factors" had also to be taken into account, besides "the principle of contiguity and linguistic affinity with a village as a unit". But the proper time for that was before the accord was signed. To add "other factors" in the terms of reference of the Mathew Commission (which was to decide the Hindi speaking areas to be transferred to Haryana in lieu of

Chandigarh) when it was not there in the accord was certainly a very wrong act on the part of the Government of India. It is good that the Prime Minister admitted the mistake but the damage was not entirely undone.

(d) Many leaders of Haryana, including the Chief Minister, on the one hand and the Akali leaders on the other began saying and doing things whose obvious aim was to pressurise the Mathew Commission. Passions were being sought to be raised over Fazilka and Abohar. Each side was virtually threatening to let the accord go to hell if the Mathew Commission's decision was not to its liking.

All these and other similar facts went to show that bourgeois leaders are incapable of placing national interests above narrow partisan, factional electoral and regional interests.

No wonder then that nothing came out of the Mathew Commission or of the subsequent ones. The Rajiv-Longowal accord is almost dead now. It needs also to be noted that the accord was not free from weaknesses. For instance, it lent credibility to the false claim of the Akali Party of being the sole representative of the Sikhs and even of Punjab. It lent certain amount of respectability to the Anandpur Saheb resolutions. As far as Rajiv Gandhi is concerned, it was signed in haste without fully understanding its implications. This alone explains subsequent attempts to manipulate the commissions.

Notwithstanding this, serious efforts and initiatives are necessary to help resolve the territorial and surplus water disputes in the spirit of the Rajiv-Logowal accord — in the spirit of give and take and keeping in view the interests of the country as a whole. No state must be required to suffer gross injustice.

The hope that the Barnala Government would be able to contain and defeat terrorism was belied. Terrorist activity was in fact stepped up. Terrorist killings increased. 'Khalistan' was declared right inside the Golden Temple. Barnala had no option but to send police into the Golden Temple. The Akali Party got split. The Barnala Government, however, survived.

Gurcharan Singh Tohra's victory in the SGPC election for Presidentship was a big gain for extremist-terrorists. They acted swiftly. The five Sikh high priests were dismissed. Known supporters of the extremists and even of separatists were installed in their place. The Golden Temple and many other Gurdwaras in the state were captured by the terrorists and had been made full use of for their nefarious activities and poisonous propaganda.

A number of new Gurdwaras began to be constructed, especially in Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts — often in uninhabited areas but at otherwise strategic places. Many extremists would boast that these would be their centres of operation at crucial times. *Kar Sewa* for construction work in many cases became covers for terrorist activity.

The new high priests made a determined bid to replace the Barnala Government by a government which would be completely subservient to the extremist forces. They declared that for the sake of "Panthic Unity" they would set up an Unified Akali Dal. They issued an edict calling upon the leaders of all the Akali factions to resign. This was a gross misuse of religion on the ground that religion and politics cannot be separated. After some vaccilation, Barnala refused to resign and was therefore excommunicated.

The Unified Akali Dal minus the Akali Dal (Longowal) was set up with Simaranjit Singh Mann, a known extremist, as President. Its constitution based on the Anandpur Sahib resolution was also ordained by the priests.

The priests had overplayed their cards. The move boomeranged. Barnala's excommunication was condemned widely by a large number of the Sikh organisations outside Punjab and a massive Sikh convention in Punjab was held at Longowal. For the first time, a section of the Akali Dal followers began to realize the necessity of separating religion and politics.

The priests launched a counter-campaign. They held a number of "shaheedi conferences" in Gurdwaras and in some of the educational institutions. Terrorist-killers who got killed in encounters were hailed as martyrs. Resolutions in support of 'Khalistan' or "Khalsa Raj" were adopted.

The move to separate religion and politics was denounced as an attack on the Akal Takht.

The So-called "Social Reforms"

A so-called campaign for social reforms on the point of the gun was also let loose by some terrorist organisations. The 13-point charter issued in this connection and also its actual implementation made it quite clear that the real aim was not social reform but something else.

The anti-liquor and anti-cigarette campaigns by burning liquor vends and tobacco shops and by killing those running them may be said to have some connection with social reforms. Everyone, however, knows that no social reform can come by force. There were number of reports that as a result of the terrorist campaign, trade in illicit liquor increased considerably. Some of the terrorists at least were in league with the bootleggers. Another measure of social reform sought to be brought about by the gun related to dowry and marriage parties. On the one hand exceptions were made, on the other the move was used for extortions.

An overwhelming majority of the Sikhs is non-vegetarian. Only some small sects are vegetarians. A larger number would regard the campaign against meat as at variance with Sikhism. This particular item seemed to have had the aim of confusing some sections of the Hindus.

The campaign against barbers, attempt to force a particular uniform in all schools and colleges (including Kesari headgear) etc were attempts not only to force on all the Sikhs outward rituals of Sikhism but also to make Sikhs out of the Hindus. These items were not even remotely connected with any kind of social reform. One of the aims of these items was to fuel Sikh fundamentalism of the Khomeini type and also to increase the Hindu-Sikh division.

Then there were items calling for killing those who might visit the Radha Swami *deras* or who might purchase properties of (migrating) Hindus.

The poster announcing the 13-point programme began with the slogan, "Khalistan Zindaband" and declared the Hindus as a community of an 'enemy'. The poster was widely distributed from within the Golden Temple.

The campaign might have helped to make the terrorists appear as the real government and to net in more youths but the sympathy it appeared to evoke in the beginning began disappearing fast. It soon became clear that their real aims remained unchanged.

It needs to be noted that Professor Darshan Singh, Acting Akal Takht Jathedar, openly and strongly supported the so-called social reform campaign through the barrel of the gun.

Moves by the Government of India to come to terms with the extremists with the help of Darshan Singh even when killings continued and even when no section of the extremists was willing to give up the demand for a theocratic Punjab did much harm. It meant a set-back to the campaign for separating religion and politics. It gave respectibility to those who had been openly backing the terrorists.

President's Rule

On the eve of elections to the Haryana Assembly, the Barnala Government was dismissed and President's rule was promulgated with effect from May 11, 1987. Undoubtedly, the timing for this was chosen with an eye on the Haryana elections. However, the move did not help the Congress(I) in Haryana.

The Barnala Government had both positive and negative aspects. It did fight the terrorists to some extent. It took the correct stand that religious places like the Golden Temple could not be allowed to be used for anti-national activities. Barnala's refusal to dissolve his party when ordered by the religious priests was objectively a positive act of great significance. A number of all-party rallies held in different parts of Punjab against separatism, terrorism and for the Hindu-Sikh unity is another positive factor of the period.

An important aspect of the other side of the picture was the considerable help which the terrorists got from within the Government. Extremist leaders like Baba Joginder Singh were allowed full freedom to preach murder and spread poison against the minority community. Barnala made mockery of the Indian Constitution when he declared that his was a Panthic Government and tried to establish it by practising communal discrimination not only in the matter of jobs but also in the matter of relief for a long time. The release of even many hardened killers was another negative feature.

It is generally agreed that there has been some improvement in the situation under the President's rule. A big number of hard-core extremists have either been captured or killed. The fear that there may be another partition of India is disappearing. The small section which had come to believe that 'Khalistan' would come into existence is getting disillusioned.

More than one factor are the cause of this improvement. Political interference in favour of extremist killers has decreased very much. Thanks to Riberio, the Punjab Police Director-General, there has been improvement in the police and in the para-military forces leading to more effective working and actions now. The extremist threat to kill even Professor Darshan Singh, the Akal Takht Jathedar, only because he began to express some differences with some of the terrorist organisations, helped to disillusion many with the militants.

President's rule means bureaucratic rule and the present one is no exception.

Left Campaigns

However, efforts made to have a dialogue at the grass-root level through *Lok Shakti Samagams* has helped to some extent. Particularly noteworthy is the statewide mass campaign launched first by the CPI and then by the CPI(M) to isolate the terrorists. The CPI went even to those villages which were considered to be terrorist strongholds. These two Left parties of Punjab have been campaigning jointly too. The communists have paid a heavy price. The CPI alone has lost 32 of its leaders and cadres including some family members. Their losses include stalwarts like Darshan Singh Canadian, Arjun Singh Mastana and *Preet Lari* editor Sumeet Singh. The CPI(M) has lost 12 including veteran Chanan Singh Dhoot and rising young leader Deepak Dhawan. The CPI(ML) has lost four or so of its members including Baldev Singh Mann, a top leader of one of the ML groups. The mass campaigning undertaken by the communists has forced some others to follow suit.

Improvement in the situation would have been more if the Government of India had released the innocents out of the Jodhpur detenus and had punished such VIPs of Delhi as had helped organise the most shameful anti-Sikh riots which followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi. These steps should be taken without further delay.

The Rajiv-Longowal accord as already noted is dead by now. It is no use harping on it but its spirit needs to be revived and initiatives taken to settle the territorial and water disputes. As a first step, let Rajiv Gandhi as President of the Congress(I) declare that the state units of his party would not now be allowed to take conflicting stands on these issues and let him call upon all other parties to make similar declarations. Let this be followed by an all-parties meet to hammer out a consensus.

A negative aspect of the President's rule needs to be noted. While it is quite baseless that innocent Sikh youths have been picked up from villages and killed, there have been excesses by the police and the para military forces. Some innocent persons have lost their lives in cross firings, by mistake or due to other reasons. Along with many genuine encounters, the possibility of some dreaded terrorists to have been killed after being captured is not ruled out. This is against the rule of law. If the present law is inadequate, it can be amended instead of the rule of law being undermined. While every excess even when it is the result of some personal enmity has been exploited by some, the Left alone has been trying to expose each and every excess and to get justice.

Here, the glorious role of the organised working class of Punjab needs to be noted. It has not allowed communalism to penetrate its ranks. It has remained fully united. Not only that; it has come out and acted in a big way against terrorism, separatism and communalism of both hues, against slogans of revenge and retaliation, for national unity and for Hindu-Sikh unity. It has done this by organising massive rallies and demonstrations consisting of thousands of people belonging to both communities at all critical times. It has resorted to work-stoppages and strikes against killings. Particularly noteworthy was the one-day strike on September 4, 1987, of more than 20,000 industrial workers and hundreds of bank employees of Amritsar against terrorist killings, for national unity and for communal peace and harmony. There was no economic or trade union demand. The call for strike was given jointly by the AITUC and the CITU. Even though the INTUC and the BMS opposed, their ranks joined the strike.

The role of the working class contrasts sharply with the role of some other classes and sections. It is a matter of deep regret that not a few intellectuals known to be progressives have been carried away by communalism and narrow class interests. While some became virtual supporters of "Khalistan", some others belonging to the other community would privately even justify the most shameful anti-Sikh riots of November 1984.

For the bourgeoisie, India is their market. The bourgeois state may still be strong enough to ensure its unity — if necessary with the help of the Army. However, it is already clear that the real unity of India, based on the unity of its people — which has to be the unity-in-diversity—can be fully safeguarded and made sure only if the working class becomes the leading class in Indian society and all democratic and patriotic forces rally around it. It can become so only by performing its duty to the country and by fulfilling its tasks.

Some other immediate tasks of the progressive forces, apart from those already mentioned, are us under:

(a) Everything possible must be done to bridge the gulf between the Hindus and the Sikhs. An atmosphere must he created in which the Sikh minority in India and the Hindu minority in Punjab feel fully safe.

(b) A powerful campaign for the separation of religion from politics and from language must be organised. No political party/activity and propoganda should be allowed in religious places and no political party should have its offices in any temple, gurudwara, mosque or church. No religious place should be allowed to store arms and ammunition and become an arsenal. No one should be a political leader and religious big-wig at the same time.

(c) The Punjab Hindus must be persuaded to own Punjabi which in fact is their mother tongue.

(d) Powerful public opinion must be built up against electoral opportunism which has come to dominate our political life.

(e) A powerful political and ideological campaign has to be run to show why 'Khalistan' is a suicidal slogan for the Sikh masses themselves. The imperialist aim to destabilise India has to be exposed day after day. False cries like the "Sikhs are second class citizens", the "Sikhs a separate nation", have to be exposed as such. At the same time, the Hindu bias in the Centre has to be opposed and fought. An instance of this bias was seen when the Haryana Government declared Kurukshetra as a holy city and the Centre did not stop it, This was at a time when controversy was raging about the Akali demand to declare Amritsar a holy city.

The Hindu rites at state functions is another glaring instance of the Hindu tinge in the thought processes of those who rule India at present. All really secular persons should demand that all Government — Central as well as the State ones, the Congress as well as the non-Congress ones — must function in a secular manner and keep religion and the state apart.

(f) Communalism of all hues must be fought with equal vigour. Communalism of every variety is poison. Majority communalism is more dangerous in the sense that it had the possibility of rallying greater numbers under its banner. No communal party should be made respectable for the sake of electoral gains.

(g) The utterly false and extremely dangerous thesis that the Hindus alone can defend India's unity must be exposed mercilessly.

It is necessary to take note of another aspect of the problem, from the viewpoint of future tasks.

In India with the development of the economy, self-consciousness of the linguistic groups/nationalities has grown. This is inevitable, natural and also a healthy development. Failure on the part of the powers that be at the Centre to accord due recognition to this fact proves counter-productive and encourages separatism. The rural bourgeoisie on the other hand seeks to give it a regionalist orientation. In Punjab, even more than that, a communal orientation is sought to be given. A theory was also propounded that for the unity of India itself regional parties should come up in all states and that the Akali Party should become a non-communal regional party of Punjab.

This is a false theory and can prove dangerous. While every regional party is not necessarily regionalist, it is necessary to fight regionalist tendencies while fighting for more powers for the states. Coming up of more and more regional parties is not a welcome development deserving encouragement.

While taking note of growing self-consciousness of various nationalities in India, note must also be taken of growing consciousness of Indian nationhood. The two have to be properly harmonised so that India's unity-in-diversity gets strengthened.

As regards the Akali Party, it seems to be a mere wishful thinking that it could soon become a non-communal regional party. In any case there can be no short-cut to waging a bitter and prolonged struggle against the misuse of religion and the caste factor by sections of exploiting classes for their narrow class interests. And this cannot be done successfully unless communalism and chauvinism of all hues is fought.

2. Socio-Economic Background

One of the interesting questions about all movements, particularly of terrorist movements, is as to what type of deflections do these movements experience in their aims and objectives as they pass from mobilisational stage to the phase of institutionalisation. It has been observed that most of the movements take off with a relatively more popular and broad-based purpose but in the meantime suffer deviations in their aims in the interest of the elitist strata of the mobilised sections of society. Thus, there is always a possibility of a wide gap occurring between what is originally intended and what is subsequently obtained in the case of these movements. As a corollary to it the mass participation paradigm of social movements is, more often than not, transformed to the class appropriation pattern after institutionalisation. In the light of this hypothesis, it is of practical importance to analyse the pattern of participation the movements of the terrorists of Punjab. Some available relevant evidence has been compiled to find out an answer to this question.

The Gurdwara Reform Movement originated in the early twenties of the present century for the ostensible purpose of liberating the Sikh shrines from the possession of the *mahants* (hereditary priests) who had introduced vice and malpractices and had developed vested interests in these places. This movement was originally directed against the *mahants* but it gradually edged towards the British Government.

A study of the background of some 50 Punjab terrorists, picked at random, reveals that a majority of them is drawn from the rich peasant or landlord and the urban middle classes and nearly one-third belong to the highly educated group. Agewise nearly 65 per cent fall in the 20-30 age group, only 10 per cent are drawn from among the teenagers. Most of them do not have any political background. This means that a political youth coming from the upper strata of the society provides leadership to the terrorists in Punjab.

A. Age Group: A study of 40 terrorists

	Age	*Nos.*	*Percentage*
i)	Below 20 years	4	10
ii)	Between 20-25 years	11	27.5
iii)	Between 25-30 years	15	37.5
iv)	Above 30 years	25	25

B. Education Qualifications: A study of 40 terrorists

	Education	*Nos.*	*Percentage*
i)	Illiterate/under matric	19	47.5
ii)	Matric	5	12.5
iii)	Undergraduate	3	7.5
iv)	Graduate/Post Graduate	13	32.5
v)	Technically qualified among the above	6	15

This shows that nearly half are either illiterate or hardly literate.

C. Economic Background: A study of 32 terrorists

	Class	*Nos.*	*Percentage*
i)	Poor peasant	5	15.62
ii)	Middle peasant	5	15.62
iii)	Rich peasant/landlord	9	28.12
iv)	Urban middle class	7	21.87
v)	Others	6	18.75

This shows that over 50 per cent belong to rich peasant/landlord and urban middle class. Poor peasants constitute only about 15 per cent which means that agricultural workers by and large are neither emotionally sympathetic to the ideology of secessionists nor have been involved in the terrorist movement. On the other hand, they have opposed secessionist slogans and terrorist activities.

D. Anti Social Links: A study of 32 terrorists

	Links with	*Nos.*	*Percentage*
i)	Smugglers	2	6.25
ii)	Drug addicts/peddlers/ Illicit liquor trade	2	6.25

This shows that among the hard-core terrorists nearly 12.50 per cent have links with smugglers and drug peddlers. This in itself is revealing for it shows the links of terrorists with smugglers and drug peddlers. There must be something more to it.

E. Political Affiliations: A study of 50 terrorists

	Party	*Nos.*	*Percentage*
i)	Akali/militants	36	72
ii)	Congress	—	—
iii)	CPI/CPI(M)	—	—
iv)	Extremist tendencies	14	28

This makes it clear that three-fourths of terrorists have some Akali background and another about 25 per cent have extremist tendencies.

A sociological survey of the extremists reveals that they mainly come from landlord, rich peasant and upper urban middle class families. To say this does not mean that their recruiting base has not extended to other sections of the Sikhs. Equally important is the fact that it is these sections of the Sikhs which provide hide-outs to the terrorists. Perhaps ideologically too, they constitute their backbone. This stands in complete contrast to the evaluation of the Akali movement in the twenties. That section of the Sikh community which had, by and large, not been able to defend its interests in the past for want of an exclusive organisation and a platform of its own, was the main driving force behind the Akali movement in the initial stages. The movement was started with the mobilisation and participation of the Mazhbi (Scheduled Caste) Sikhs who constituted the ranks of the landless peasantry in the countryside. The Akali movement in the twenties essentially was an anti-imperialist movement though it manifested itself in religious garb. The secessionist slogans and the terrorist movement distinctly have reflected pro-imperialist tendencies and linkages.

The habitat of the participants in the Akali *morchas* launched during the Gurdwara Reform Movement:

Morcha	*Habitat*			
	Rural	*Urban*	*Unknown*	*Total*
Nankana* 1921	84 (97.67)	2 (2.33)	- -	86 (100.00)
Guru-ka-Bagh** 1922	803 (97.00)	20 (2.42)	4 (0.48)	827 (100.00)
Jaitu*** 1923-25	177 (92.67)	12 (6.28)	2 (1.05)	191 (100.00)
Total:	1064 (96.38)	34 (3.08)	6 (0.54)	1104 (100.00)

The background data of the participants in three major Akali *morchas* (collated in the Table above) reveals that more than 96 per cent of the Akali participants in these *morchas* hailed from rural areas dominated by Jats. The leadership of the *jathas* proceeding to these *morchas* used to be, almost invariably, in the

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* Data compiled from the names and addresses of the participants killed in the Nankana tragedy given in Giani Pratap Singh, *Gurdwara Sudhar Athwa Akali Lehar*, Amritsar, 1951, pp. 119-22.

** Data compiled from the list of names and addresses of the sufferers in the Guru-ka-Bagh Morcha provided in, *ibid*, pp. 240-73.

*** Data compiled from the list of names and addresses of the participants in the Jaitu Morcha given in, Visakha Singh, *Malwa Itihas*, Vol. 3, Kishan Pura Kalan 1954, pp. 692-700.

—Compiled by Gobinder Singh

hands of the ruralites. The massive participation of the rural population, particularly of the peasant strata of the Sikh community, in the Gurdwara Reform Movement made certain contemporary observers to virtually regard it as a peasant movement in Punjab.

Although the people's participation in an ostensibly religious movement like the Gurdwara Reform Movement cannot be absolutely categorised in terms of particular sections of the population yet the available evidence provides sufficient ground to infer that the middle and the lower strata of the Sikh peasantry played a key role in it. The upper strata of this community, comprising the rich landlords and feudal nobility, who by and large pledged their loyalty to the British, expressed its opposition to this movement. The coincidence of this movement with the agitational phases of the national movement in India, its close liaison with the national forces in the country and its shift of emphasis from religious to political issues, were all but the unfolding of national and political aspirations of the lower strata of the Sikh peasantry. The movement in its formative years, therefore, articulated the political and national interests, of primarily these sections of the Sikh population.

However, the process of institutionalisation initiated by the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925, centralised the control of the Sikh temples. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a popular body of the Sikhs created by the Act, became the custodian of the Sikh shrines along with their huge and multifarious resources.

The institutional resources of the SGPC provide abundant facilities for food and shelter. They not only provide security against vagaries of climate but are also deemed to be equally effective against the coercive machinery of the state. Thus, though meant for religious purposes, the institutional resources of the SGPC can also be utilised to enhance the political interests of the party in control of it. Consequently, the tremendous size of the institutional resources of the SGPC and their convertible character have been the dominant factors influencing the Akali Movement. The income of the eleven leading shrines managed by this body stood at Rs 307,68,963 in 1980. Between 1966 and 1981 alone the income of the eleven important Gurdwaras mentioned above has recorded a 656.64 per cent hike. The budget of the SGPC itself increased by 577.41 per cent over a decade and a half preceding 1980.

The SGPC has a big contingent of employees in its service. These include *Ragis* (hymn singers), *Dhadis* (ode singers), *Percharaks* (preachers), *Kavishars* (stage poets), *Granthis* (priests), *Panj Piyaras* (baptisers), *Sevadars* (attendants), drivers and mechanics. Besides, similar corps of employees are maintained by the Gurdwaras subordinate to this body. Whereas it spent Rs 25,64,200 on the salaries of its staff in 1981-82, the eleven major Gurdwaras and the educational institutions run by it earmarked Rs 1,25,02,435 for this purpose during the same period. The vast personal resources of the SGPC have two important implications. In the first place, it can wield tremendous power of patronage by offering employment to strategic sections of the Sikh population. Secondly, the thousands of employees on its pay rolls can act as a comprehensive network of communication to disseminate its ideology and message to the Sikh masses at the grass roots. By virtue of its extensive manpower, this body has the potentialities of building support structure for the party controlling this institution.

Lastly, the SGPC has significant moral resources. The term moral in this context implies the capabilities of this body to influence the thinking and social behaviour of the people through religious messages and symbols deployed generally in the serene environment of the Gurdwaras. Large number of people visit these places daily to pay homage to the Gurus. The crowds are exceptionally large on the occasions of religious fairs which are frequently held in the Sikh temples. Religious and political sermons are delivered to the masses in the presence of the holy *Granth* from the Gurdwara stage which is often monopolistically occupied by the leaders of the party in power in the SGPC. Whatever the credulous mass of the Sikh people see or listen during their pilgrimage to these places, is believed by them to be a part of their sacred duty. It becomes almost impossible for the devoted masses to dislodge the impressions and orientations formed inside the shrines.

This explains the strategic position which the SGPC and Gurudwaras controlled by it enjoy and the important role they play in the Akali politics and thereof in the Punjab politics.

In this background, it will not be difficult to understand why the extremists and terrorists want to control all the Gurudwaras directly if possible or indirectly through those who provide them the moral support. In fact, if in the fifties and partly in the sixties, the struggle to control the SGPC was between the Congress and the Akalis, in the recent years, this struggle has been going on between the 'moderates' and the 'extremists'. There is yet another aspect of this problem.

A survey of the SGPC members makes an interesting study. This survey shows that 53.4 per cent of the SGPC members belong to the upper strata of the Sikh community. Of these 46.60 per cent are farmers and 6.8 per cent non-farmers.

This analysis has been made primarily to bring out that whatever support base the terrorists have, whether in terms of moral or material support, it accrues to them mainly from the upper rung of the land-owing class.

It must be admitted that our attempt to analyse the support structure of terrorism and secessionism essentially remains partial and fragmentary. As terrorism and fundamentalism in the Indian context serve the strategy of US imperialism, its major structural support comes from external academic, political and material sources.

Nevertheless, this study once again clearly establishes that politically it will be dangerous to equate terrorism with the Sikhs or for that matter trace it exclusively to some of the grievances of the Sikhs and other Punjabis. These factors have compounded the situation and one should not ignore this aspect. But in a study like this what has been intended is that socio-economic background of the terrorists should be objectively assessed and the problem seen in that context.

— *By A Research Scholar*

3. The Sikh Tradition and the Claims of Separatists

There can not be a greater travesty of truth than the terrorists' claim to fight for 'Khalistan' in the name of Sikh religion and tradition. The principle means employed in this fight is that of killing, killing of innocent people and killing of those whom they believe to be their opponents. Most attacks have been made on people who were utterly defenceless. Sleeping in their homes or working in their fields, or doing peaceful business or labour at their place of work — most of them have been preyed upon unawares. Even those who could have been aware simply had no means to combat the trained attackers armed with sophisticated weapons.

'Khalistan' terrorists hide in the Gurdwaraa taking advantage of the State's reluctance in the matter of ordering police or other forces inside them too often. The Gurdwaras are now the places where meetings are held and assassinations planned. These are also being used for storing of arms and for imparting training. Threatening letters for extortions are sent from there. The Golden Temple, Amritsar, the holiest of the "Panj Takhts" of the Sikh tradition, has been desecrated beyond measure. A place where devotees used to throng in lakhs and where the daily prayer would attract hundreds from Amritsar city and its environs and where normally could be seen a fairly noticeable sprinking of non-Sikhs is generally deserted today. The rooms adjoining *Parikarma* have also been used as torture chambers where many of their victims have perished. More than all this the Manji Saheb Dewan Hall has been used for proclaiming 'Khalistan' and for organising *Sarbat*

Khalsas wherein separatism has been preached and open threats administered to all who would refuse to fall in line.

Since all this is being done under the cover and banner of Sikh religion, the question naturally arises as to how far they speak and stand for Sikhism. There is a large section of Sikhs today, including those who are relatively well-educated and well-placed, who while rejecting 'Khalistan', have a vague sympathy with the "boys". At the root of this sympathy lies a sense of grievance which they might have been nursing on some account or the other but which has been aggravated by the trauma of Operation Bluestar. They might well be secular at heart, which in fact quite often they are, and may have been votaries of the Hindu-Sikh unity, but because of the hurt psyche they seem to be believing that the "boys" somehow are doing something which is aimed at securing a better future for the Sikh community, or in any case, so the argument goes, since they are "challenging" the might of the Centre at grave risks to their lives, they have nothing else except the good of the community at heart.

Feelings of a similar type are also shared by the ordinary middle class Sikhs and by elements of the Sikh peasantry who are the witness, and in quite a few cases the victims as well, of the senseless killings which have become almost a routine now. A combination of such confused thinking and the circumstance of widespread terror has resulted in a situation where the voice of reason and sanity among the Sikhs has been suppressed and muted. It has become all the more necessary therefore to examine the relationship, or the absence of it, between the Sikh extremism and terrorism, on the one hand, and the teachings and practices of the Sikh religion, on the other.

Our people have a long tradition of tolerance and understanding in the domain of religious beliefs. Still, there may be many, particularly among the younger generation, who have no idea of what the Sikh religion stands for, and many among them have known the Sikhs only through their own exposure to media stories about them in the recent period which have not always presented an objective view of them. Many of them like the Sikhs with a hurt psyche may be entertaining the belief that terrorists are seeking to spearhead something which may in fact be the Sikh cause. Such a distorted impression is strengthened first and foremost by the statements made by the 'Khalistani' leaders themselves.

The 'Khalistan' Demand

The theme of Sikh grievances has been the stock in trade of the Akali Dal leadership since India won independence. Of course, one should not reject such protestations just out of hand. But what the Sikh separatists have done is that they have made these grievances appear irredressable under a "Hindu rule". Comparing the Central Government with the Mughals and calling it the representative of "Hindu imperialism", the separatists have proclaimed that nothing short of 'Khalistan' can satisfy the Sikhs. In fact, though the demand for 'Khalistan' was expressly made in the post-Operation Bluestar period, the attempts to create conditions conducive for its formation had been going on since the rise of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in 1981. Though apparently evasive on the separatist demand, saying repeatedly that "we do not demand 'Khalistan', but if the Government gives it, we shall not reject. We will not repeat the mistake that we committed in 1947", Sant Bhindranwale did everything possible to create conditions which would lead to the carving out of a separate state for the Sikhs.

Bhindranwale acted on two planks both of which, for various reasons, proved affective. He spoke to religious congregations preaching hatred against the Hindus, calling them *sir ghapia, dhele da lala, topiwala etc.* Threatening the Hindus with mass slaughter he would say, "after all, each Sikh had only to cope with 35 Hindus". He called Sardar Darbara Singh, then Chief Minister of Punjab, Zakaria Khan , one-time Mughal Governor of Lahore, an oppressor of the Sikhs. He called Indira Gandhi *bahmani* , *bahman di dhee* and so on. His second plank consisted of setting up the killer squads which perpetrated ghastly crimes like murder of bus passengers and of prominent public figures who opposed his cult of separatism and violence.

It may be of some interest to note that while Bhindranwale preached hatred from within the precincts of the Golden Temple complex most of the discourses concerned current political affairs. He referred to *Gurbani* infrequently and strictly avoided mentioning most of the vital teachings of Sikhism. He selectively picked up instances of the Sikh sacrifices and of the Mughal oppression to issue warnings and threats to the Government. He twisted the meanings of some remarks made by the Gurus to draw a parallel with the present situation and to justify his call for arming the

Sikh youth with modern weapons. Bhindranwale's present-day followers do not even conduct discourses and concentrate on killings, believing this to be the best way for propagating separatism. The present terrorist leadership is different from Bhindranwale in a sense that they are far less conversant with *Gurbani* and the Sikh teachings and traditions. Be that as it may, neither Bhindranwale nor his followers had really anything to do with the essential teachings of Sikhism.

What *Adi Granth* Teaches

The teachings of the Sikh religion are embodied in the *Adi Granth*, the holy book comprising 1430 pages. The 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, ordained that after him the *Granth* shall be respected and revered by the Sikhs as their Guru and that they would seek moral and spiritual guidance from the teachings contained therein. Besides the *Bani* of the Gurus, there are hundreds of couples from saints of the *Bhakti* movement whose teachings, the 5th Guru, Guru Arjan Dev, the compiler and editor, found to be in consonance with the basic tenets of Sikhism. Apart from the deeply spiritual character of the most of the *Bani* it reflects at places, the social and political urges of those times. There is a sharp criticism of Babar's invasion and plunder. There are scathing attacks on the caste system and such other evils then dominating medieval India. The teachings of Sikhism herein are in common with those of the *Bhakti* movement. The humanity of Sikhism is reflected not only in that the *Bani* does not make a distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim or a Brahmin and a Shudra and preaches equality of all men and women before God, but also in the fact that the Sikh Gurus in the process of building the edifice of the Sikh religion gave prominent place to religious men belonging to other faiths. The inclusion of *Bani* of Kabir and Sheikh Farid shows the expanse of the 5th Guru's vision. While Kabir was a crusader in the cause of human equality and outspokenly rejected the caste system, Sheikh Farid was a Sufi saint who believed in and practised Islam. So much so that some couplets of Farid selected for the *Adi Granth* contain the poet's criticism of his ownself for not being a true Muslim and having not gone to mosque for *namaz* five times a day.

The point here in that as far as the *Adi Granth* is concerned, there is not the remotest possibility of a sectarian or communal interpretation. Not only that the Sikh history abounds in examples which prove beyond a shadow of doubt that some of the close associates of the Gurus were non-Sikhs i.e., Muslims, since the Hindus and the Sikhs at that time were indistinguishable. Consider for example such irrefutable evidence as the following:

— Out of the two permanent companions of Guru Nanak who worked with him for over 24 years, one was Mardana, a Muslim musician.

— The foundation stone of the 'Har Mandir' (Golden Temple) at Amritsar, presently under forced occupation of the terrorists, was laid by the Muslim saint, Mian Mir, who also interceded though unsuccessfully with Emperor Jehangir's officials of commutation of the death sentence on Guru Arjan Dev. Nevertheless he protested vehemently with total disregard for the dangers involved.

— The 10th Guru, Gobind Singh, was helped by the Muslim saint Pir Budhu Shah of Sadhaura who lost hundreds of his men and two of his sons in the service of the Guru in the battle of Bhangani in the year 1688. In the battle of Anandpur in 1702 two Muslims commanded the forces of the Guru in the battle against the Mughal troops. And, finally, Ghani Khan and Nabi Khan saved him from being captured by the Mughal officials when they were pursuing him after he had lost the battle.

— Bhai Ghanaya was a water-carrier with the *Khalsa* army When the Sikhs complained to the Guru that he supplied water even to the injured Muslim soldiers, Ghanaya replied in the Guru's presence that he saw only the Guru's face in the faces of the Sikh and the Muslim soldiers.

And, of course, the 9th Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was executed mainly because he opposed forcible conversion of the Kashmiri Hindus, though the fact that he was the head of the House of Nanak and the grandson of the 5th Guru, another saint-rebel, must have weighed with the Mughal officials who recommended his execution.

Emergence of *Khalsa*

The transformation of the Sikhs into *Khalsa*, masterminded by the 10th Guru, is in itself a fascinating story. But even he, who was a great admirer of the *Bhagwati,* the sword (written and pronounced as *Bhagauti,* in Punjabi) and who had every reason for bitterness against the Mughal role, because his father and great grandfather were brutally done to death and his grandfather was imprisoned on the express orders of Emperors Jehangir and Aurangzeb, did not recognise the distinction of religion, caste or creed. He wrote:

> "Some are Hindus while others are Muslims. Of the latter some are *Shias* and others are *Sunnis.* Man's caste should be considered as one. *(Manas ki jat sabhai ekai pehchaniyo).*
>
> *"Karta, Karim, Razak, Rahim* is the same. No other distinction should be recognised at all.
>
> "Temple and mosque are the same. All men are alike, but they are under delusion.
>
> "Gods, demons, heavenly dancers, singers, Muslims, Hindus wear different dresses under the condition of their countries. But they possess eyes, ears, bodies, made of the same elements, composed of earth, air, fire and water.
>
> *"Allah* the unknowable, the *Puranas* and the *Quran* are the same. All are the manifestations of one and one is the creator of all".
>
> And again:
>
> "Even in error deem not the god of Hindus,
> To be other than the God of Muslims,
> Worship the one God,
> Recognize the Enlightener,
> All men have the same human form,
> In all men blazes the same light".*

Thus, like the *Adi Granth,* the teachings of the 10th Guru, which incidently are not included in the *Granth* except for one couplet, are also imbued with the same deep humanity, with a total rejection of any distinction on the basis of religion or caste. The terrorists' inspiration therefore cannot have been derived from either the teachings of the Gurus or from the examples of their lives.

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*From Guru Gobind Singh's writings, *Jap Sahib* and *Akal Ustad,* quoted in the '*History of Sikhs*, Vol I, by Dr Hari Ram Gupta, p. 259.

Those who have been led to believe that the Hindus and the Sikhs have lived in an adversative relationship or that Sikhism is a negation of the Hindu religious thought and tradition have only to refer to some of the notable poetical works of Guru Gobind Singh like *Bachitar Natak*, *Chandi Di War*, or other portions of *Dasam Grath* to come to the conclusion that the 10th Guru attached great significance to the Hindu mythology and philosophy and made extensive use of some of its militant traditions to fashion the spiritual edifice on which he placed the *Khalsa.* It may be of some interest to note that he mentioned in *Bachitar Natak* that the 'Bedis' to whom Guru Nanak belonged, and the Sodhis of whom he was one himself, were the decendants of Luv and Kush respectively, the two sons of Shri Rama. And what about that well-known couplet widely accepted as the battle cry of the Sikhs i.e. *Deh Shiva bar mohe ehai....* from *Chandi Chitra ?* How does the hatred preached by the separatists against a whole religious community square up with the 10th Guru asking for *vardan* from Lord Shiva?

Misinterpretation of History

Having raised the banner of separatism in the garb of religion the terrorist leadership felt compelled to make use of the troubled history of the Sikhs; if not of the Guru period, then of the period that followed the demise of Guru Gobind Singh. Herein also they draw a blank. In the phase that opened up with the rise of Banda Bahadur in the first decade of the 18th century and culminated in the complete British occupation of Punjab in 1849, a period roughly of 150 years, various types of Sikh organisations emerged. Starting with the remnants of the 10th Guru's army which formed the leading core of Banda's untrained and ill-equipped soldiery, this period ended with the defeat and disbandment of the then modern *Khalsa* Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This one and a half century is replete with severe persecutions of the Sikhs and their rising to the level of an organised revolt. It was in the fight against Ahmed Shah Abdali that the Sikhs gave a notable account of themselves as a rising power of some consequence. The famous *Misls* arose in this period and were finally subdued or won over by Ranjit Singh who truly represented the climax of this process.

But the historic episodes of this period also cannot be recalled by the separatists to serve their present hate campaign against the Hindus. The Sikh community and its traditions were still in formation. Those who wanted to fight oppression and were prepared to pay the price, joined the Sikh *jathas* and became *singhs* themselves. Those who remained Hindus, helped them in their struggle, and irked facing the ire of their common oppressors. It is well-known that in the first *Ghalu Ghara* in June 1746, 10,000 Sikhs were slaughtered wholesale. The Hindu citizens of Lahore interceded on behalf of 3,000 of them who had been brought there as prisoners and offered all their wealth in exchange for sparing their lives. But that was not to be.

The Sikh *Misls* introduced the *Rakhi* system in the fifties of the 18th century by which arrangement armed bands of the Sikhs would offer physical protection to all, including in particular the Hindus, and charged a levy equivalent to 20 per cent of the income of their wards.

Ranjit Singh's Secularism

Ranjit Singh is usually called a secular Maharaja. And though he employed both force and cunning to establish his kingdom, he was intelligent enough to base his monarchy on a sort of coalition of the then existing forces in Punjab. His Council of Ministers included both Hindus and Muslims. He went to great lengths in the matter of making offerings to religious places, particularly to the Hindu temples.

Thus whichever way the separatists may turn in search of a basis of discord between the Hindus and the Sikhs, they cannot sustain their thesis of Sikh animus against the Hindus.

While the leaders of the separatists are not keen to learn anything about the actual history of their ancestors, they have, nevertheless, picked up some of its traditions and tried to use them for their present struggle. Since they did not really understand them, they were bound to distort them. In the recent period *Sarbat Khalsas* have been called including those which though technically called by the Sikh priests, were actually sponsored by the separatists. In one of these, the resolution on 'Khalistan' has been passed. Calling of the *Sarbat Khalsas* is a tradition again of the period of the *Misls*. Neither before the advent of this period nor after the establishment of Ranjit Singh's rule there was any gathering of the

Sikhs in this form. But in the agitation for 'Khalistan' this form was resorted to, to befool the simple-minded Sikhs having deep attachment with their hoary past. When the *Misls* called a *Khalsa Sarbat* it was to work out a common strategy of fight. The analogy may hold up to this point and no further.

In those circumstances, despite their inner contradictions, the commonly agreed programme of fight of the *Misls* represented the best interests of the beleaguered Sikh community. How can the present situation of the Sikh community be compared to that? The recent *Sarbat Khalsas* were called by a coterie. In the *Khalsa Sarbat* where the 'Khalistan' resolution was passed not even most of the Akali leaders were present; there were no Sikh Congressmen nor any other section of the Sikhs whose views are not in accordance with the 'Khalistanis'. In fact, this technique of foisting a coterie decision on the entire community, and making it appear that since it was taken at a *Sarbat Khalsa* it, in fact, represented the collective opinion of the community, is simply a fascistic technique. It was used by Bhindranwale during his speeches. When he preached hatred he would quite often challenge the congregation to prove him wrong. No body would accept his challenge in such a kept audience because everyone knew what the price would be. Thus securing the approval of the *Sangat* fortified by the slogan shouting of his own heavily armed admirers, he would proclaim that the *Khalsa* had given its approval to whatever he said. If this was not fascism what else is? What have these practices common with the teachings and traditions of Sikhism wherein humility is regarded as the highest attribute of a *Gursikh* and where the 10th Guru himself, accepting baptism from the *Panj Piaras*, is regarded as the best example of the same?

Sikh Communal Politicians

Sikh communal politicians have made frequent use of *Raj karega Khalsa* and *Khalsa ji ke bol bale* both of which occur in the *Ardas*, the former as a part of the couplet sung immediately after the *Ardas* proper and the latter as part of the text of the *Ardas* itself. The *bol bale* theme is also central to the Anandpur Saheb Resolution. There is some controversy as to the actual authorship of these. While it is possible that *Khalsa ji ke bol bale* was conceived and authored by the 10th Guru or any one of his close associates, *Raj karega Khalsa* belongs to a latter period. Both *Khalsa ji ke bol bale* and *Raj karega Khalsa* were the product of a period when the *Khalsa Panth* was seeking to emerge out of what for them were the dark ages of repression. It was quite in order that the *Ardas* composed in those days should have referred to the potential of the Sikh power in the context of what treatment had been meted out to them at the hands of the Mughal rulers. The *Raj karega Khalsa* would have been an appropriate war cry when the Sikhs were fighting Abdalis and others with their back to the wall, instilling hope of political power in them. The *Ardas* is essentially the briefest description of the Sikh history. It is now a part, a very important part, of all Sikh religious ceremonies. But it is of course not a manifesto of a *Khalsa* rule.

In any case, if Guru Gobind Singh, a prolific poet, an accomplished leader of men and a brave commander and strategist, had visualised an exclusive *Khalsa* state of the type the present day separatists are clamouring for, nothing could have prevented him from writing it in so many words. In fact his whole struggle was directed at removing the injustices and in this struggle, he wanted to involve everyone. His creation, the *Khalsa,* was to spearhead this battle. Beyond the removal of injustice and the establishment of a just rule, he did not lay down any guidelines.

The *Miri-Piri* Concept

Much has been made of another notable historical concept evolved during the Guru period, i.e. the concept of *Miri-Piri,* propounded by the 6th Guru, Guru Hargobind. Here one would agree with the proposition that in the past political battles have been fought under the banner of religion. In fact even Christianity arose in the period of slave revolts and became their banner to an extent. But in the two thousands years the world has changed beyond measure. The Sikh Gurus invited the wrath of emperors because Sikhism seemed to them evolving into a forum of protest and an alternative force which any state would either like to smother or else make deal with. But what was an inevitable result of the then historical development three or four centuries ago cannot be mechanically transposed on to political battles of the late 20th century. Separation of politics from religion is one of the important issues of contemporary Indian political life. It is enshrined in the Constitution of India. All religious communities while enjoying full freedom in matters pertaining to their faith are equally obliged not to mix up such problems with political questions or take political advantage of communal issues. The Sikhs should not be an exception.

— By A Political Analyst

4. Some Observations and Conclusions

It stands out clearly that the largest number of terrorist-killers hail from Amritsar district, followed by Gurdaspur district. The reason for the terrorists deciding to concentrate on these two border districts is their ability to get arms and ammunitions from across the border without much difficulty, utilising also the services of smugglers. The ethno-religious composition of the population of these border districts suits best the 'Khalistani' terrorists for building a mass base with the help of religiosity and religious fundamentalism. Concentration on these two districts also suits the strategy of the rulers of Pakistan. Even while encouraging and helping those who want "Khalistan", they know that no Indian Government would allow another partition of India, come what may. The Pakistani rulers, however, do hope that at a critical time, they will be able to occupy such parts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts as would virtually cut off Kashmir from the rest of India.

There is enough material in the bio-data of terrorists contained in this book to prove that a good part of training in sophisticated weapons to the brain-washed youths has been and is still being given in Pakistan. No one in India now has any doubt about it. It is also now well established that US imperialism, and some of its Western allies too, have been actively encouraging and helping the 'Khalistani' terrorists. A number of facts which bear this out have been mentioned in the chapter entitled Punjab Crisis. Another significant fact was reported only a few days ago. According to these reports a Canadian citizen Balkar Singh, who recently came to India to give money and guidance to the terrorist organisations in Punjab and who figures in the chapter, Punjab Crisis, belonged to an official secret service agency of the Government of Canada.

The members of the Sikh religious community in India are economically much better off than the members of any other religious community except perhaps the Parsees. The poorest amongst the Sikhs are the Sikh agricultural labourers of Punjab and Sikh industrial workers, particularly the unskilled ones not yet organised in trade unions. It is significant that out of a fairly large number of terrorists about whom information is contained in the book, only one belongs to a family of agricultural labourers. He too became a terrorist-killer under the influence of a Jat Sikh youth and the *sarpanch* of his village. There may be some more terrorists belonging to Mazhbi Sikh agricultural labourers' families.

No one, however, can dispute the fact that they would constitute an insignificant minority of terrorists in Punjab. It is also significant that in some cases at least, Sikh agricultural labourers had come out openly against the activities of the terrorists. There is the instance of the village Sakheera, in Amritsar district. It needs to be added that when Sant Bhindranwale called for the killing of the Hindus at the time of Operation Bluestar, in many villages the Hindus were saved by Sikh agricultural labourers.

During the so-called social reform movement launched by the extremists, they were the agricultural labourers of Faridkot district who resisted their violence and accepted their challenge.

It would also be noted that the number of terrorists coming from industrial workers is also almost nil. There are two Roadways workers out of all who figure in the book. At least one of them was would return to the mainstream. He, however, continued to remain were given jobs by the Barnala Government in the hope that they would return to the mainstream. He however, continued to remain a terrorist-killer. Only one, Panthic Committee member Wassan Singh of Gurdaspur district, out of all those covered by the book, was a worker in a mill for a few years.

The Role of the Working Class

The glorious role played by the organised working class of Punjab in fighting separatism, terrorism and communalism of both the hues finds mention, even though a brief one, in another part of the book.

As will be noted by the readers, some of the terrorists belong to Backward Castes and also to the urban middle class. Their number however is not large.

The largest number of terrorists come from land-owning Sikh Jat peasants. Some of these belong to large families with holdings which are not large. They are from poor and middle peasant families. However, the data collected does not bear out the view put forward by some that big majority of terrorists belong to poor peasant large families with little land. Quite a sizeable number comes from well off rich peasant and even prosperous landlord families. Similarly, the view expressed by some that most of the terrorists are illiterate or very little educated is not borne out by the data collected in this book. Many are well educated — matriculates, undergraduates and graduates and even post-graduates. Some of them are also technically qualified.

Some of the terrorists have close links with influential and well-off politicians, including ex-Ministers and ex-MLAs as well as with class I officers — retired or serving.

Another significant fact came out of the data: Gurtej Singh Brar, an IAS officer-turned one of the principal advisors of Bhindranwale, comes from a very affluent Sikh Jat landlord family. Then there is Simranjit Singh Mann. He comes from a big landlord family — who misused his official position as a Senior Superintendent of Police to help the extremists and is even reported to have organised some terrorist groups out of policemen. The data mentions some ex-Army officers whose big bungalows and houses provided shelter to terrorists and/or were used as store houses for weapons. It is a well known fact that most of the Sikh Army officers came from landlord families — some of them were pro-British when the British ruled the country. There is also the fact that amongst the military advisers of Sant Bhindranwale were such top Army officers as Shabeg Singh (dismissed) who got killed during Operation Bluestar and Jaswant Singh who escaped from India and now heads the World Sikh Organisation (WSO) in the USA.

To find out which classes or groups a movement in fact seeks to serve, it is not enough to examine as to which classes or groups its active cadres come from. It is also necessary to see as to which classes or groups are financing the particular movement, which classes or groups its advisers come from, which classes or groups constituting its brain trust belong to, etc.

The data does help us to understand that it is the vested interests amongst the Sikhs, especially the landlords and the rural elite who stand for a theocratic state within India with a very weak Centre (Anandpur Saheb resolution) or even a "sovereign Khalistan" — which demand fits in with the imperialist conspiracy to dismember India because India refuses to become a satellite state. Clearly, a theocratic Sikh state will serve their interests and not the interests of the common Sikhs.

The data in the book should help any impartial reader to understand various factors which help them to mobilise some mass support and to get "militants" even from other groups and classes to fight their battle. One of these is the religion and caste appeal which the landlord class is able to make because of the ethnic composition of Punjab. A big majority of the land-owning peasantry in this state belongs to the Sikh religion and the Jat caste. These two factors are fully misused and exploited to the maximum.

Some educated youths who do not see much prospect of the types of jobs or avenues in life they seek in the present set up become victims of false propaganda that in "Khalistan" alone all the hopes and expectations of all the Sikhs will get fulfilled. Even well-established middle classes get affected by the propaganda that they will have still better prospects in a theocratic Sikh state — especially when such propaganda is combined with the prospect of the "Sikh-rule", with the appeal of religious fundamentalism, with continuous and false propaganda that the Sikhs are a separate nation having an independent political (as distinct from religious) identity, with the equally false propaganda that the Sikhs are discriminated against, which is helped by the Hindu bias which willy-nilly does exist in the Government of India.

Operation Bluestar, the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, unpardonable failure of the Government of India to prosecute such VIPs as helped in organising these riots also egged on the terrorist organisations backed by imperialism and pro-imperialist millionaire Sikh US citizens and the like, to get more recruits. Besides the spirit of adventurism, lure of weapons, easy money, etc. too have played a big part. In some cases, more than one member of a family have become terrorists. Quite a few are otherwise inter-related.

The Terrorist-Smuggler Nexus

As invariably happens, the terrorist movement of the type which has come up in Punjab cannot but provide shelter to all types of anti-social elements. There have been a large number of such elements amongst the Punjab terrorists too. Some who became terrorists were really lumpen elements, and some because it provided an opportunity to take revenge, etc. The data in the book also brings out the fact that there has been a nexus between the terrorists and smugglers from the very beginning and this nexus has been to mutual benefit. Some of the most notorious smugglers had made the Golden Temple their headquarters and were operating from there till the Bluestar operation. One of them, Satinder P T, got killed inside the complex. There might have been differences between him and Bhindranwale but obviously they were not of the type which would make Sant Bhindranwale throw him out. Some terrorists were originally smugglers.

Mutual suspicion, rivalries, mutual killings and utter degeneration amongst terrorists would seem inevitable under the circumstances. According to Amritsar SSP Azhar Alam, only one group, namely, the Babber Khalsa, has remained clean. That is quite possible because a number of good youths believing in good values and traditions of the Sikh religion got swayed into the wrong path under the influence of false propaganda and religiosity. All efforts should be made to persuade such youths to give up the futile path of terrorism, to surrender their arms and return to the path of genuine struggle for a just society, which struggle can be waged only on the basis of the unity of toilers irrespective of their religion, and not on the basis of communalism or with the help of terrorism. Such as surrender and pledge to give up the path of terrorism have to be treated leniently.

There is however, no doubt, and this is fully brought out by the data, that many if not most of the terrorist killers have become great degenerates in their personal lives. Some have become even professional killers ready to be hired by any one. How many of them can be brought to the path of sanity is doubtful.

The Truth about Naxalites

A question is often raised about the relationship between

Naxalism and the 'Khalistani' terrorism. On more than one occasion Home Minister Buta Singh, on the one hand and Gurcharan Singh Tohra, on the other, have alleged that in the ranks of terrorists a large number of Naxalites have penetrated. This is far from the truth. The real situation is something as under:

Some ex-Naxalites did become followers of Bhindranwale and terrorists. According to a pro-Naxalite journalist, out of about 12 groups of Naxalites in Punjab, nine are opposed to the killing of the innocent people and to attempts to divide the Hindus and the Sikhs. They are also against the misuse of Gurdwaras by the terrorists and are opposed to the demand for 'Khalistan'.

At least one group is fully with the 'Khalistani' terrorists and it has characterised their "struggle" as the "struggle for the liberation of the Punjabi nation".

Out of the nine groups opposed to them, only three or so have some pockets of influence in Punjab. Some of them have done some good work against separatism, terrorism and communalism, both before and after the Bluestar operation period. In our view their work on the whole suffers from serious weakness because of some of their wrong theoretical positions. One group believes that terrorists can be fought only by revolutionaries with arms in hand and it is futile to try to make the present state take any effective action. This group has been carrying on a virulent campaign against the CPI because it does not agree with it. It also came out against Baldev Singh Mann who was shot dead by terrorists and whose group has been sincerely working for cooperation between the Left parties to the maximum possible extent.

Even groups firmly anti-communal and strongly opposed to theocracy share the belief that, the path to Indian revolution lies through creating liberated zones. One of the Naxalite ideologues wrote in his journal that unity of India is something about which only the bourgeoisie need worry not the Left. Unlike the CPI and the CPI(M), Naxalites do not think that disruption of the unity of India will cause a great damage to the forces of Indian revolution and the world revolutionary process. This fact is one of the factors which have made some ex-Naxalites and at least one Naxalite group line up with the terrorists. Others have not let this wrong belief overwhelm their convictions and about all their firm belief in the need of the unity of toilers.

Another weakness from which some of the Naxalite groups suffer is their inability to work out a correct attitude towards the police and other security forces of the bourgeois state in the concrete situation prevailing in Punjab today. The need of the hour is to support and demand strong action against terrorists while also demanding and taking political initiatives and exposing and opposing all excesses by the police and the para-military forces. Any acts which violate the rule of law should also be opposed while amendments to law to make it adequate to effectively deal with the phenomenon of terrorism should be demanded. Some, though not all of the Naxalite groups seem unable to adopt or appreciate such a flexible stand.

While the ruling Congress (I) refuses to see any excesses on the part of the police and the para-military forces, some Naxalite groups believe that their attitude must be of total opposition (irrespective of the concrete situation and balance of forces) to all limbs of the coercive apparatus of the bourgeois state. This leads them to characterise excesses as state terrorism and this helps those who falsify facts to propagate the false theory that individual terrorism in Punjab is the result of State terrorism.

Their own wrong positions have led some pro-Naxalite intellectuals to completely overlook the really good work done by the CPI and also the CPI(M) and declare that they have been sacrificing their cadres and leaders without any purpose. Some of them have wrongly accused the CPI and the CPI(M) of having reached an agreement with the bourgeois parties not to criticise each other. This is nothing but a travesty of truth. Both the CPI and the CPI(M) have run independent mass campaigns during which they have exposed and explained to the people the responsibility of the bourgeois parties — especially of the Congress(I) and the Akali Dal — for the Punjab crisis. They also believe that on specific points of agreement there should also be a joint campaign going beyond the Left parties. And they have worked for it and stand for it even today. There is no contradiction between the need of an independent campaign and the struggle by the Left and the need for uniting all patriotic forces which stand for India's unity in diversity and for communal peace and harmony.

In the data in the book, there is reference to "Naxalite Spill Over". Some bourgeois politicians have often tried to blame the Naxalites for terrorism in Punjab. We have therefore dealt with the question at some length — as we see it.

PART-II

The Hardcore Terrorists: Who's Who

5. The Hardcore Terrorists

1. AMRIK KAUR/SUKHDEEP SINGH

Even as militants inside the Golden Temple were active in recruiting minor boys as couriers to carry arms, the district police on September 12, 1987 presented the case of a woman who was trapped by militants inside the Temple and persuaded into becoming their arms courier, and, thereafter, even sexually exploited.

Amrik Kaur, 30, a mother of four children, had been regularly performing *kar seva* in the Golden Temple. About six months ago a woman introduced her to a "Khalistan Liberation Force" leader, Surinder Singh Sansra, alias "Sansra Sahib". Amrik was asked to accompany Surinder to the latter's village — Sansra. On nearing the village, she was asked to go alone and hand over a revolver to one Bikramjit Singh, another terrorist, who was living in the village. Later, she was given Rs 100 as "reward".

Amrik told newsmen that she then returned to her village, Khapan Kheri, near Chheharta, about 8 Km from Amritsar, and told her husband, Darshan Singh, a petty worker employed in a nearby factory, about the incident. However, strangely, she returned to the Temple after 4-5 days despite her husband's warning to her against it. "I was drawn to the Temple again because of *kar seva*", she said while the Superintendent of Police (Detective), Rajinder Singh, maintained that she went back in the hope of making more money.

Amrik was again persuaded into performing the act of carrying revolvers to terrorists, considering that being a woman she would be least suspected. Then one and a half months ago, Amrik alleged, Surinder took her to a movie in a local cinema and "sexually exploited her to the fullest" on the box seats of the cinema. "He did it against my will, but I did not dare protest out of fear", she said in a voice choked with emotion and with tears in her eyes.

Amrik, who was picked up from a market-place in the walled city a few days ago on a tip-off by the city police, was sent home without any case having been registered against her. "She did not have any arms when we caught her, and, besides, we firmly believe that she is a case of victimisation in which she had been terrorised into committing these acts", Rajinder Singh said.

The district police presented the case of a teenager from whom a poem written in praise of the notorious terrorist Harjinder Singh "Jinda", had been recovered. Sukhdeep Singh, 19, a resident of Mohali near Chandigarh, and presently employed in the Punjab State Agriculture Marketing Board, Chandigarh, had been visiting terrorists lodged in the Amritsar Central Jail with a *granthi* whenever he came to the city to visit his two brothers working here. Sukhdeep Singh confessed about the crimes he had committed before Operation Bluestar as a student of the local Khalsa College. However, "considering that he had not committed any crime after Operation Bluestar and feeling that he was a classic case of a misguided youth, we allowed him to go", Rajinder Singh said.

— *Indian Express,* Chandigarh,
September 13, 1987.

2. AVTAR SINGH

An alleged hardcore terrorist, had also been in the election fray in Jammu and Kashmir. He is Avtar Singh, currently lodged in the Jammu Central Jail facing charges of organising terrorist activity in the state, especially after Operation Bluestar.

Avtar Singh, 34, a bachelor had contested as an Independent for The Jammu Cantonment Assembly constituency. There are about 10,000 Sikh votes in this constituency but he could poll not even 1,000 votes. Interestingly, earlier his sister, Manjit Kaur, also filed her nomination as an independent for the same seat but later withdrew. Her husband, Narinder Singh, is also an alleged terrorist and is under detention these days.

Avtar Singh belongs to Jammu. His parents live in Nanak Pura in Jammu Cantonment. He was employed in the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and posted in Amritsar when he came in contact with the All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) leaders, including the slain Bhai Amrik Singh, president, and the detained Harminder Singh Sandhu, general secretary of the militant organisation. It was during the early eighties while the Akali *Dharm Yudh Morcha* was going on in Amrtisar.

Avtar Singh left government service and joined the Jammu University as a student of law. In the university, he came into contact with Sarabjit Singh who was the then general secretary of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of the AISSF. Friendship struck. Avtar Singh became the chief organiser of the state unit of the AISSF. He first confined his militant activity to Nanakpur his locality in the town but later shifted to Poonch, the border district in the state.

Avtar Singh was allegedly the main organiser of the terrorist activity in the Jammu region after Operation Bluestar. It was revealed during his interrogation later that he had masterminded the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane from Srinagar in July 84.

Avtar Singh was nabbed by the paramilitary forces on the border of Bishnah in Jammu district in September 1984 while he was returning from Pakistan. A light machine gun (LMG) was recovered from him along with some documents and a diary which revealed that he had a detailed programme to organise terrorist activity in the state including the killings of some VIPs. All his main accomplices, including Sarabjit Singh, Mithben Singh, son of Parduman Singh Azad, the former Congress(I) MLA from Jammu Cantonment and joint secretary of the AICC(I) who was removed from the party later, and Harcharan Singh, president of the State unit of the AISSF, have been arrested since then.

— *Indian Express*,
March 15, 1987.

3. AVTAR SINGH BRAHAMA

Avtar Singh Brahama, a dreaded terrorist of Amritsar district, hit the headlines in the newspapers throughout the country towards the end of December 1986. From a house adjacent to the Gurdwara in his native village Brahmapura (Tehsil Tarn Taran), speaking in Punjabi from a public-speaking system he hurled abuses at the CRPF men posted in the village and challanged them to arrest him. The CRPF men later explained that no Punjab police official had been attached with them, that they did not understand Punjabi language hailing as they did from South India and that they recognised a terrorist when he shouted the slogan "Khalistan Zindabad." It was too late to surround the house and to capture him. A search was carried out in a part of the village. In some cases doors were broken open to facilitate search. Some had been bolted from within. Some people were beaten up. One woman was allegedly bitten on her cheek by one CRPF man.

Brahama could not be caught but indiscriminate searches and the alleged incident led to great resentment. The terrorist's supporters acted swiftly or, may be according to their already hatched plan. One corner of *Guru Granth Sahib* was burnt and it was given out that the CRPF had burnt the Holy Book of the Sikhs. From various quarters, including the high priests, a loud demand for the withdrawal of the CRPF from Punjab was raised. Leaders of all political parties, except the CPI, spoke with much anger on the presumption that the CRPF had really burnt the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Some of these leaders did so even while knowing the truth. Chief Minister Barnala demanded the arrest of the entire battalion. Only the Amritsar District Council of the CPI dared speak the truth. It condemned the excesses committed and demanded punishment for the guilty. At the same time, it exposed the fabrication regarding the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Prior to this, Avtar Singh Brahama had committed many acts of terrorism: In 1985, he had fired upon Harinder Singh, SHO of Police Station Sarhali. Harinder Singh was injured but managed to survive. Sometime later, Avtar Singh Brahama and his gang attacked a police party near Chola Sahib. One ASI and two others got killed. His next major exploit was an attack on a CRPF patrol party near village Theh Brahama, P. S. Bhikhiwind. One sub-inspector and two jawans were killed. This was followed by gruesome killings of all the six members of a Sikh family of V. Tur, along with a relative who was the seventh victim. It is believed by many that Brahama had helped this family to illegally take possession of some land and was very friendly with it. However, his advances towards a young daughter of the family were resented and resisted. The killings were Brahama's revenge.

Avtar Singh's main area of operation had been within the jurisdiction of Police Station Hareke and the neighbourhood. He had often been seen in police unifrom. In the beginning, he was working as a part of the Khalsa Commando Force of the terrorist outfit called "the Panthic Committee". Brahama began working with the "Khalsa Liberation Force" (AISSF—Manjit Group) and even independently. Only 25 years old, the Security forces have not been able to catch him as yet.

His father, Sohan Singh, belongs to village Brahmpura which is only 2 kilometres from Mand area of river Beas, an ideal place for terrorists to hide and to operate from. Avtar Singh is the third of the four brothers. The eldest brother and both the sisters are married.

It is a poor peasant family. Sohan Singh owns less than 2 acres of land. Avtar's brothers buy *bhusa* and fuelwood from the village and sell the same. One of the brothers is notorious for being a habitual drunkard.

Brahama is totally illiterate. He can only sign. When he was still very young, he was given away by his parents to the Bidhi Chand sect of Nihangs. He was brought up in their *Dera* in village Sur Singh in Amritsar district. As per the practice of the *Dera,* he was baptised.

As other Nihang sects, Bidhi Chand sect too indulges in taking illegal possession of land; AvtarSingh too learnt the "art". This sect of Nihangs has a *Dera* in the Mand area of river Beas. Avtar Singh Brahama was shifted there. And it was here that he came in contact with the extremists. Soon thereafter he got linked with Baba Amrik Singh Jaura who was made the Chief of the Budha Dal Nihangs in place of Baba Santa Singh who was excommunicated by the priests for agreeing to undertake *kar seva* to repair/reconstruct the Akal Takht which had been damaged during Operation Bluestar.

Brahampura village from which this dreaded terrorist hails is a stronghold of extremists. Ranjit Singh Brahampura, General Secreatry of the Unified Akali Dal floated by the priests, also hails from this village. According to many the *sarpanch* of the village as well as the headmaster of the village school are also pro-extremists.

— *India Press Agency,*
July 25, 1987.

4. BALJEET SINGH alias PAPPU

Baljeet Singh alias Pappu was born to Basant Singh of village

Arjanpura in the district of Gurdaspur, which falls under the police station of Dhariwal. He belongs to a poor Jat family. He is not well educated and has not passed even the middle standard examination.

His father had a large family to support. Baljeet has three brothers and four sisters. One of his sisters is married to a cousin brother of Wassan Singh, a member of the so-called "Panthic Committee". One of his brothers is employed in the Punjab Electricity Board.

Baljeet is just about 20 years. He is very smart and strong-willed.

It is generally believed that once he had close links with Gagandeep Singh, s/o Sardar Surjeet Singh Barnala, former Chief Minister of Punjab. People say that whenever the police went to Arjanpura, both Baljeet and Harjinder Singh Jinda would keep freely moving about and the police would not touch them. None dared point out their presence to the police.

Baljeet had close links with the Tarsem Singh Kohad group of terrorists. He committed his first crime when along with other members of his group he assassinated Makhan Singh and his gunman Harbhanan Singh, near Naushera Majja Singh while they were travelling in a tonga. Later he took part in scores of bank decoities, lootings and murders. There is a strong terrorist group in Arjanpura. One Gulzar Singh reportedly used to act as the cashier of the group. They had collected lakhs of rupees. The group originally consisted of about 20 members. Some of them had made some settlement with the police. Some others had gone underground.

In 1986, Baljeet, Jinda and two other members of their group tried to snatch a VCR in Chandigarh. Baljeet Singh was arrested by the police on the spot due to some timely information. The Maruti car which was used in the incident was also taken into custody by the police.

It was widely reported in the press that the car had a VVIP number which only the Chief Minister could allot. Chief Minister Barnala had allotted it at the instance of his son Gagandeep Singh. When the scandal broke out, Gagandeep Singh was sent abroad by his father. He is still abroad. A top officer of the Government of Punjab held the view that the son was trying to buy safety for the family. This perhaps was the most generous explanation. Surjeet Singh Barnala himself never gave any satisfactory or convincing explanation. It was reported in a section of the press that the Chief Minister had taken to task his son for bringing bad name to him and his family.

There is another interesting aspect of the story. When any member of this group was arrested, Gulzar Singh would ensure his release using the money kept with him by the gang. Some believe that in this task Harbhajan Singh s/o Mohan Singh, the *sarpanch* of the village, used to act as a contact with police. Once there arose a dispute between Gulzar Singh and some members of the group. It so happened that Satnam Singh alias Satta, s/o Gulzar Singh who was also a terrorist, had surrendered with some weapons. Gulzar Singh with the help of money which the gang used to keep with him ensured his safety. When the other terrorists came to know of it, they met Gulzar Singh and point-blank told him that he had saved his son but where should they go? They demanded money. The dispute, the story goes, was taken to the Golden Temple. Gulzar Singh was asked to pay two lakhs. He had to pay Rs 50,000 immediately and the balance in instalments.

Baljeet Singh had become a dreaded terrorist. He was one of the chief culprits in the Muktsar bus massacre. He was responsible for a score of crimes in the area. It should be noted that the economic condition of his family was very bad because his father had died. But after Baljeet became a terrorist, considerable change can now be seen in the family's economic condition. Another noteworthy aspect is that almost every family in Arjanpura has some overt or covert link with the terrorists.

— June 6, 1987.

5. DIDAR SINGH

Didar Singh, a terrorist trained in Pakistan, had recently surrendered to the police in Gurdaspur district. Obviously, he had been trying to get out of the web of the Khalistani terrorists. He had returned from Pakistan last August after a two-year stay there. He had gone there after Operation Bluestar.

He was gunned down on January 31 by other terrorists.

Leaders of the so-called Khalistan Liberation Force has charged the Khalistan Commando Force of the five-member Panthic Committee with killing the leaders of the KLF.

Among the killed are Sukhdev Singh Sakira, Gurbinder Singh

Bhola and United Akali Dal leader Jagjit Singh Rode. Sakira and Bhola carried rewards of Rs one lakh each on their heads.

— *New Age*,
February 8, 1987

6. GURBACHAN SINGH MANOCHAL

Manochal is a village in the Tarn Taran sub-division of Amritsar district. Notorious terrorist Gurbachan Singh belongs to this village.

Gurbachan Singh Manochal's grandfather had five sons, one of them was Atma Singh — father of Gurbachan Singh.

The ancestral land was divided amongst the five brothers, each getting five acres of land. Atma Singh for quite some time has been living in Singapore with his wife's brother. They, it is reported, possess land there. Atma Singh had also acquired land in the village Naushehra Pannuan. It is not certain whether it was purchased with full ownership rights. Some allege that it was purchased at a very low price as compared to the then prevailing market price, from some Hindu family as a result of undue pressure.

Atma Singh's land in the village Manochal is being tilled by his brother, Karaj Singh, who is also the husband of his wife's sister. Karaj Singh, it is said, has been a Bhindranwale supporter. Karaj Singh has four children, and one of his sons is in PAP. Another son is an absconder and like Gurbachan Singh, he too is wanted by the police. The third son is a farmer.

Gurbachan Singh Manochal is the eldest of Atma Singh's four sons. He has a sister who is the eldest of the five children.

Religious-minded from the very beginning, Gurbachan Singh had joined the Army as a jawan. In the Army he quarrelled with an officer and is said to have assaulted him. He was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. After his release, he became a follower of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He was member of the *jatha* which had marched from the Golden Temple to the site of the Nirankari Samagam in Amritsar on April 13, 1978. This *jatha* had marched after a highly provocative speech by Sant Bhindranwale and despite the efforts to the contrary of Akali leader Jathedar Jeewan Singh Umranangal. In the clash that took place between the Nirankari volunteers and the *jatha*, Gurbachan Singh received a bullet injury.

Gurbachan Singh's family (his wife and three minor children) and he himself had shifted from Manochal to Naushehra Pannuan — native village of his mother. The entire family has been residing there for quite some time. Gurbachan Singh's uncles however continue to live in Manochal.

Gurbachan Singh started the construction of a gurdwara in Naushehra Pannuan. He spent a good deal of time collecting funds. The gurdwara is still incomplete.

He was made one of the five members of the Panthic Committee set up by the Damdami Taksal (and some other exteremist organisations) to look after "Panthic affairs".

Gurbachan Singh Manochal was one of those who proclaimed 'Khalistan' from within the Golden Temple on April 30, 1986. Thereafter he had also been declared acting Jathedar of Akal Takht by the underground Panthic Committee. The para-military forces and the police have been after him and at least twice he had a very narrow escape.

One of his brothers, Tirlochan Singh, is an Army deserter and has been sentenced to 14 years imprisonment.

Yet another brother, Narwair Singh, had disappeared after Operation Bluestar. He was wanted by the police and a reward of Rs 5000 for anyone helping to get him arrested was announced. He was arrested some time ago. The fourth brother, Narinder Singh is in Naushehra Pannuan with the rest of the family.

It needs to be noted that excepting Karaj Singh, other brothers of Atma Singh and also their families are strongly opposed to extremism and terrorism.

Interestingly, those of the family who are extremists or have sympathy for their cause are economically better off, perhaps much better off, than those who are opposed to extremism and terrorism.

— *Patriot,*
October 17, 1986.

7. GURBINDER SINGH 'BHOLA

The press in Punjab had reported that another dreaded terrorist of Amritsar district had been done to death by terrorists belonging to another group. Earlier, it was Sukhdev Singh Sankhera belonging

to Tarn Taran area of this district. This time it was Gurbinder Singh Bhola belonging to Tarn Taran proper.

What type of man this Bhola was? Why and how he became a terrorist? Why was he killed by terrorists themselves? Answers to these questions are revealing and interesting.

Bhola was one of the six sons of Sardar Gopal Singh of Tarn Taran town. Gopal Singh has the same number of daughters. He belongs to Ramgarhia caste and used to be a municipal contractor. He is now leading a retired life. He is quite old.

Gopal Singh has been a religious-minded person. He has *Guru Granth Sahib* at his home.

Bhola was number five of the six brothers. He learnt the work of a painter and adopted that as a profession. He used to carry on his profession from the family house itself. He would write mottos, paint signboards symbols on flags, threshers, etc. During the months when well-off landowners would buy threshers etc. Bhola would have roaring business. He would engage assistants at Rs. 10 per day or so. He would have in this period a net income of even Rs. 100 per day. His average daily income however, would be about Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per day.

His one brother is a draftsman. He works on his own and has good business. Two brothers are contractors. One owns and runs a sawmill. One is a bank employee.

It it clear that the family is reasonably well-off. In no case it can be considered poor.

Obviously Bhola, who was only 24 years old and unmarried had drifted to extremism and terrorism mainly under the impact of religiosity. In 1982, he told more than one acquaintance of his that he had become vice president of Dal Khalsa. He was not taken seriously. His friends thought that he was only joking. Soon afterwards, however, he become an activist of the All India Sikh Students Federation. At more or less this time, he began some sort of a chit fund and got into financial trouble. Also, he along with another youngman attacked a son of a retired D.S.P. This youngman too became an extremist. The attack was due to altogether personal reasons. Soon after, the branch of a nationalised bank in village Sarhali Khurd, near Tarn Taran, was looted. It was generally believed that was Bhola's exploit. Police was after him. He took shelter in the Golden Temple. This was in 1983.

Sometime later about 6 persons were shot dead in Jagraon in district Ludhiana, while out for a morning walk. It was reported that Bhola was one of the killers.

It is also believed that he was one of the gang which shot dead in Jalandhar, Ramesh Chander. editor of the *Hind Samachar* group of papers.

Again, it is believed that Bhola was the leader of the terrorist squad which killed H S Manchanda in Delhi.

He was arrested by the police near Jandiala Guru in the Amaritsar district on the eve of Operation Bluestar.

In connection with cases registered in Tarn Taran, Bhola used to be taken to the courts there. His supporters would collect on the way, stop the police van, shouting slogans and would get into it and accompany Bhola. The police allowed this. Police would also allow Bhola to visit his family on such occasions and would stop at his house even for about an hour at a time.

In July 1986, he had been taken to the Jalandhar courts, along with the co-accused in connection with the Romesh murder case. It was there that their police guards were attacked. Seven were killed. Bhola and the co-accused were freed by their terrorist friends.

Soon after his escape, Bhola is reported to have told a friend: "I know no one would have dared depose against us in the Ramesh murder case. We would have been acquitted. But not so in the Manchanda murder case. Conviction would be certain in that trial. That is why we planned escape from Jalandhar courts".

Bhola was close to Sukhdev Singh Sakheera. He was very resentful of the latter's murder. In a meeting of the terrorists he had spoken against mutual killings but had also threatened to avenge the killing of his friend. It is believed that opponents of the Sakheera group killed him soon after. It is believed to be the same group (Manjit Singh Khajala and others) which had claimed responsibility for the most gruesome killing of 22 bus passengers on November 30, 1986 near Tanda in Hoshiarpur district.

— *India Press Agency*,
December 5, 1976.

8. GURJUNT SINGH

Gurjunt Singh, son of Nachhatar Singh of village Budh Singhwalla near Bagha Purana, district Faridkot, is talked about in the area around his village for more than one reason. A terrorist, he is the Lt. Commander of the Khalsa Commando Force.

He has built a big house which has cost more than Rs 1 lakh—much beyond his means.

He has an interesting family history. Karnail Singh, real brother of his grandfather Kehr Singh, got killed in 1984 outside the gurdwara during Moga firing incident. His uncle Harchand Singh, real brother of his father Nachhatar Singh, used to live in the gurdwara. Unmarried, he was very close to Jagjit Singh Rode. He took possession of about 10 acres of land which there was no one to inherit. He did so with the help of Sant Bhindranwale.

It was under the influence of his uncle Harchand Singh that Gurjunt Singh became a follower of Sant Bhindranwale.

His father, Nachhatar Singh, had inherited only 1½ acres of land. He took to selling illicit liquor and drugs. A drunkard, he never enjoyed any respect or influence, though people were always afraid of him.

Gurjunt Singh has 3 brothers. One of them, Kulwant Singh, is undergoing life imprisonment for having murdered Dhanna Singh of village Raueke Kurd, P. S. Nihal Singhwalla, district Faridkot.

Gurjunt Singh had close relationship with the terrorist Waryam Singh Khapianwali who was killed in police encounter. Gurjunt Singh is one of the terrorists responsible for the Muktsar bus massacre. He is also one of those who murdered SHO Gurtej Singh in Bhatinda.

After Waryam's death Gurjunt Singh formed his own separate group under the name of Kesari Commando Force and started functioning independently in Faridkot district.

Gurjunt Singh is totally illiterate and is hardly 23 years old. He has a flowing beard.

His other two brothers, Roop Singh and Bounger Singh, do agriculture in their village. They too are illiterate. Gurjunt frequently visits his village. The police does not appear very keen to catch him.

— June 29, 1987.

9. GURTEJ SINGH BRAR

Gurtej Singh Brar resigned from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) in 1981 to become a Sikh ideologue and one of the principal advisers of the late Jarnail Singh Bhindrawnwale. He is a proclaimed offender (PO) and his whereabouts are not known. A case of sedition was registered against Gurtej by the Chandigarh police on May 14, 1984, for co-authoring a controversial booklet titled, *Betrayal of Sikhs* highly critical of the Central Government.

Retired Maj Gen J S Bhuller, the co-accused in the same sedition case and also a proclaimed offender, is in the USA and a lot has been appearing about him in the press as head of the World Sikh Organisation (WSO) which he formed in Washington after succeeding in slipping away from the country after Operation Blue Star.

However, nothing has been heard about Gurtej in the last two and a half years. His wife, Surinder Kaur, is living with her two school-going children — Anirupita (daughter) and Amit Singh (son) — in a family house in Sector 8 in Chandigarh. In a voice choked with emotion she told *Indian Express:* "It has been a long wait and very tough going. Unlike my husband, I have never been interested in politics but I had hoped that after the Akalis came to power in Punjab they would withdraw the case against Gurtej. Now I learn that the case against him was registered at the instance of the Centre".

Two days before Operation Bluestar, Gurtej drove from Chandigarh to his farm in village Singpura, near Fazilka, with his wife and children. The family was to attend a marriage at Muktsar on June 8. But on June 3 began the historic "Operation". Recalls Surinder Kaur: "We learnt about the Operation from the morning bulletin of the BBC on June 4, Gurtej became very serious. Later some newspapers even reported that he was killed during the Operation".

Gurtej stayed at his farm till the end of June 1984. Later he went to Delhi with his wife to consult some lawyer friends of the Supreme Court about the sedition case registered against him by the Chandigarh police. The lawyers "advised" him to remain underground till the withdrawal of the case and the former civil servant, it appears, has been sincerely following that advice since then.

The Chandigarh Senior Superintendent of Police, R K Niyogi, says he is not "sure" whether Gurtej is in the country or has gone abroad.

Gurtej, 42, belongs to an affluent Jat Sikh family of Faridkot district. The family has big land holdings. After doing his post-graduation in history from the Panjab University in the late sixties, Gurtej taught in a private college for some time in Jalandhar. He appeared for the Civil Services examination and qualified for the Indian Police Service (IPS) in the first attempt. He tried again and was selected for the IAS while he was doing his training for the IPS at Mount Abu.

He was allotted the Andhra cadre which he did not like. He wanted the Punjab cadre. From 1971 till 1977, Gurtej served in different positions as a bureaucrat in Andhra Pradesh but then "managed" to come to Punjab on deputation. According to his former bureaucrat colleagues, Gurtej was "close" to Giani Zail Singh and Parkash Singh Badal but later fell out with both.

After joining as Deputy Secretary (Home) in Punjab in 1977 Gurtej came under the influence of the controversial Sikh ideologue, the late Kapur Singh, and gradually became inclined towards fundamentalism. Before resigning from the IAS in 1981, Gurtej used to openly say that the Central Government was Hindu chauvanist and anti-Sikh. He wrote a number of articles and repeatedly pointed out that the Central Government had been discriminating against Sikhs since Independence.

Gurtej then began taking keen interest in Punjab politics. He came in direct contact with senior Akali leaders, including the late Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, and Gurcharan Singh Tohra. It was at this time that he got friendly with the late Bhindranwale. He became a regular visitor of the militant Sikh leader in the Golden Temple and soon became his chief advisor.

— *Indian Express*,
February 4, 1987

10. GURWINDER KAUR

A leading extremist woman Gurwinder Kaur, of village Dialgarh, district Gurdaspur said, "It has never come even to our mind that Pakistanis would help us from the core of their hearts. Therefore, whenever Pakistan attacks India, the Sikh community will fight them tooth and nail." According to Gurwinder Kaur, Pakistan in reality, is not helping the Sikhs, it is actually trying to avenge its defeat during the last two wars with India.

Gurwinder Kaur is a 28-year old married woman. She knows only Punjabi which she can speak and write fluently. She told us that since her childhood she was religious-minded but she never thought of becoming an extremist.

Telling of her links with extremism, she told us that being religious-minded, she used to visit Harimandir Sahib frequently. On April 4, 1984, Sant Bhindranwale solemnised my and my younger sister's marriages. She said, "My husband Jaswinder Singh, alias Jagga of Bassandi (Faridkot), and sister Parmjit's husband, Lakhwinder Singh of Bhura (a cousin of Bhai Amrik Singh), had militant views. I already knew that my husband was wanted by the police as he was involved in many murder cases. Having identical views, I did not bother about it. But I got involved practically in extremist activities only seven months after my marriage. The reason was that soon after our marriages there was Operation Bluestar. Parmjit's husband was killed in the operation but my husband was missing.

"It was under these circumstances that my family came to know that Jagga was an extremist. As he was missing, my family thought of arranging my second marriage elsewhere. At that time I was pregnant, and with my second marriage in view, my parents compelled me to undergo abortion in a private nursing home in Gurdaspur. But on the return of Jagga, the second marriage could not take place", she said.

According to Gurwinder Kaur, after that both of them (she and her husband) shifted to Agra and Gwalior where they stayed in gurdwaras for a considerably long period. Continuing her tale she said, "When we returned, we came to know that the police was already in search of Jagga. One Jagir Singh (Sidhwan) of Shri Hargobindpur area took us to Bombay. He was a big transporter there. In Bombay a big fraud was committed on me. I was taken to a nursing home for treatment but later on I came to know that my tubectomy operation had been done. I do not know if Jagga was in the know of it. I came to know about the operation only recently when I went to a nursing home in Gurdaspur for a check up. The lady doctor told me about the operation and disclosed that there was no hope of a child. I was very much shocked."

Talking about 'Khalistan', Gurwinder Kaur said, "To start with the Sikhs were struggling only for the acceptance of the Anandpur Resolution. Now the Panthak Committee has declared Khalistan as the objective and the Sikhs now shall have to fight for it. But I think that Khalistan will not bring any solace to the Sikhs. When

Pakistan came into being, many of our gurdwaras were separated from us. And now if Khalistan is created, many more gurdwaras will go beyond our reach. Then it is not an easy job to achieve Khalistan. Sikhs shall have to make immense sacrifices."

When asked what she had been doing for the extremists and in what way was she helping them, she disclosed, "Myself and some other girl friends had only one job: transportation of arms from one place to another. At first, we used to do this under instructions of Tarsem Singh Kohad and then of Avtar Singh Rupewali." She conceded that she had done this job about two hundred times. Uusually the revolvers and ammunition was transported. Stenguns etc were seldon part of it. She said, "When arms like stenguns had to be moved from one place to another, it was done with the help of some comrade on scooter and usually they were covered under the shawl. While performing this job I had the least fear in my mind. I usually operated between Gurdaspur, Ludhiana and Faridkot. I had three other girl companions, namely, Daljit Kaur of Ghani (Phagwara), Kamaljit Kaur (Arjanpura), and Harjinder Kaur alias Pinki of Qadian."

Talking about the militant organisations she said they were very suspicious about each other. So much so that once even Wassan Singh (a member of the Panthak Committee) was suspected to be a man of Barnala, and it was argued that he often visited Barnala's various ministers and was responsible for the arrest of his many colleagues. The suspicion was further strengthened on the arrest of Tarsem Singh Kohad. Later on Bhai Wassan Singh himself appeared before his colleagues to clarify everything. Only then the matters were set at rest.

She disclosed that Bhai Aroor Singh, a member of the Panthak Committee, was expelled from the Committee because, in violation of Panthic rules, he had a love marriage and he often used to talk against the Damdami Taksal. He now operated separately in alliance with Manjit Singh Khiala who was his chum.

About the Muktsar bus tragedy, she said, "Before the tragedy all our companions, including Waryam Singh Khapianwali, and Harjinder Singh Jinda, wanted to do something which would leave the people stunned. For this simple reason they committed this crime." According to Gurvinder, "After the Muktsar bus tragedy, Harjinder Singh Jinda usually remained very perturbed. (He was later arrested in Qadian on January 8, 1987.) On several occasions he used to say that he would never repeat such acts and would never kill any innocent person. After that he never committed any murder himself.

She went on, "The extremists are very suspicious by nature. Once they suspect some one, they never leave him alive." She herself saved her life once with great difficulty. She narrated the story thus: "On January 4, 1987, I was staying in the village Bahadur Sen. Jinda brought me to Kokalpur. The same day the police raided our hideout at Bahadur Sen and arrested some of our colleagues. Everybody held me responsible for this raid. There was a reason for this also. I became tired of this life for the last three months and wanted to surrender. I had told this to all the colleagues. Hence the suspicion. On this very ground, Mandip Singh was deputed to finish me off. He reached Kokalpur on January 6 only for this purpose but I did not meet him. That is how I saved myself."

When told that "It means you also fear death," she replied, "I don't fear death but I do not want to die as a traitor. On January 17, Jinda contacted all our colleagues and made it clear to them that it was he who took me away from Bahadur Sen. After that I was forgiven." Gurvinder Kaur was of the opinion that it was not desirable for the girls to join the extremists. She felt that once a girl joined them, it became impossible for her to get out of it. "If at all a girl wants to leave them, they would not leave her alive," Gurvinder said. Giving an example she said, "Harjinder Kaur alias Pinki of Qadian has given up this job and she also has been expelled from the party. But whenever she expresses her desire to surrender, she is threatened of liquidation. Now on the one hand she is evading the police, on the other the extremists". Denying the suggestion that Pinki had already been killed by the extremists, Gurvinder Kaur said, "She is still alive and only a few days back I met her in the Company Gardens of Amritsar. She was very upset. Some extremists accuse her being of loose-character."

Talking about the disunity in the ranks of the extremists, Gurwinder said, "They are very much a divided lot." She showed a letter from her husband Jagga wherein Jagga had corroborated this fact and disclosed that because of that many extremists had been killed and many more arrested by the police. Due to disunity, he had advised Gurwinder to leave the job and lead a peaceful life at home.

Gurwinder further said, "The day we were arrested, we had a plan to loot a bank near the Batala Sugar Mills."

About her sister Parmjit, she said, "About a year and a half ago she was remarried to Tarsem Singh Kohad in some gurdwara in Hoshiarpur district and now she is living in a village called Dial Gardh." She also conceded that some of her colleagues alleged her to be of loose character but she did not bother about them. It was her heart's desire that the extremists and the government should reach some accord so that extremism too might come to an end. In the absence of such a settlement, neither it was good for the extremists nor for the government.

— *Hind Samachar*
January 22, 1987.

11. HARJINDER SINGH 'JINDA'

"The company of extremists means sure death. If one does not obey them, they threaten to eliminate the whole of the family but falling in line with them leads to a sure death at the hands of the security forces". These views were expressed by a leading terrorist Harjinder Singh alias Jinda of Arjanpura (Dhariwal) in his talk with *Jagbani.*

On January 12, 1987, we had an hour-long interview with Jinda in Qadian (district Gurdaspur) to ascertain what, after all, these terrorists wanted, what was their main demand and why did they take to terrorism.

Jinda is a smart young man of twenty. He graduated from Government College, Gurdaspur in 1985. When we enquired of him the reason of his becoming a terrorist, he narrated his story thus:

Although just after the Operation Bluestar, my mind was overtaken by the various grouses against the Central Government, the November 1984 riots added fuel to the fire and I wanted to do something, but being busy in my studies I could not fulfil my desire. Just to find an outlet, I used to give vent to my views in talks with Hira Singh of village Vazirchak under the Dhariwal Saddar Police station. Once Hira Singh came to me and asked me to accompany him to his house. There he introduced me to Wassan Singh (now a member of Panthak Committee). Wassan Singh said to me, "If you want to serve the Panth (Sikh community), you shall have to follow our dictates". I agreed. It was January 1986.

Jinda disclosed that on the behest of Wassan Singh he got himself involved along with one Baljit Singh (who at the time of the interview was locked in the Sangrur jail), in the case of murder of of Makhan Singh and his gun-man Bhajan Singh while they were travelling in a tonga. Makhan Singh was an eye-witness to the February 21 Chhina bus massacre near Naushera Majja Singh, district Gurdaspur.

Harjinder Singh Jinda further said, "After that I had the chance to meet Tarsem Singh Kohad. But I was recognised in the very first crime committed by me. Hence I had absconded. I was very much worried and wanted to get rid of this nightmare. In March 1986, with the help of my family members and through the *sarpanch* of our village, Sardar Darbhajan Singh, I made arrangements to surrender before the Dhariwal police officers, and even the day had been fixed. But somehow Tarsem Singh Kohad came to know of it. He came to my house and threatened to assassinate the whole of my family if I dared surrender. He gave a similar threat to *sarpanch* Harbhajan Singh in case he helped surrender anybody. Hence the plan to surrender was given up.

Jinda continued, "Then I had to carry on with this. I also developed a lust for fame. I wanted to do something which could bring me at par with Wassan Singh Kohad and Khapianwali. The whole plan for the Muktsar massacre was prepared by Tarsem Singh Kohad. The wireless sets used there were provided by Peera, grandson of an ex-MP. After committing the crime, we reached village Ramiana. Khapainwali was with us. The whole massacre was aimed at avenging the riots of Delhi and elsewhere".

Jinda further said that after the death of Khapianwali, their companion Gurjunt Singh of Budhsinghwala (district Faridkot) formed his own separate group under the name of Kesari Commando Force. He started functioning independently in district Faridkot.

According to Jinda, after the Operation Bluestar, Pakistan used to provide arms to terrorists in good quantity and would promise them all types of help. According to him all this fuss has been created by Pakistan but lately they have started backing out. Though Jinda himself has never been to Pakistan but he was told by youngmen returning from Pakistan that all this mischief had been created by Pakistanis and now they wanted to leave them (terrorists) in the lurch.

About the assassinations being committed these days, Jinda said, "Now we are left with fewer arms and about 80 per cent of the arms have been recovered by the police". He continued, "a few days back, some forty Sikh youngmen were able to enter Punjab from Pakistan. All of them belong to the Babbar Khalsa faction".

According to Jinda, most of the extremists having been arrested, the Babbars had planned the whole thing in Pakistan and decided to enter Punjab. All the members of this group act in a very planned manner. The Babbars are not identified by their names but by code numbers. They have very sophisticated arms and all of them belong to district Amritsar.

Jinda told an interesting story. Once they looted a sum of Rs 35,000 from a bank in village Swaddi in Ludhiana district. Next day they read in the newspapers that a sum of Rs, 50,000 had been looted. They intended to write a letter demanding the remaining sum of Rs 15,000 as it had been made away with by some bank employee.

When Jinda was asked about the prize of his head, he said, "One night, when I was staying with Harjinder Singh alias Kakka of village Akhada (Ludhiana) who was killed in an encounter on April 13 in Sohari near Kalanaur, I came to know that I carried a price of Rs. 50,000 on my head. But I do not know about the prize of Rs. one lakh".

Jinda admitted that he used to often see Bhai Wassan Singh and the last time he met him was November 18, 1986 in Gurudwara Gurdarshan Parkash near Mehta, district Amritsar.

Jinda further disclosed, "Wassan Singh presently puts on tight clothes like pant and shirt. He also ties his beard. I, having disclosed everything to the police, will be put to death by my companions. The government may forgive me but the extremists will never".

Talking about 'Khalistan', he conceded, "Khalistan may give the Sikhs some solace from the religion point of view, but so far as economic gains are concerned, there will be none. I am personally against Khalistan but I favour more powers to Sikhs and non-interference by the Government in their religious affairs. The Jodhpur detenus should be released and the Army deserters should be rehabilitated. Those guilty of November 1984 riots should be punished according to the law of the land. Then and only then peace can be restored in Punjab. The Sikh youth are annoyed mainly because the guilty of riots are not deliberately being punished".

He continued, "The Anandpur Resolution must be implemented. The Sikhs have a kind of sentimental attachment with it and it contains nothing anti-national".

Talking about his arrest he said, "It was very difficult to arrest me because I had with me an identitycard of the Punjab Roadways in the name of one Balwinder Kumar and it was extremely useful for me. But I was arrested due to Gurbinder Kaur (Ghug) who had been identified by the BSF. I am prepared to undergo any kind of punishment for the crimes I have committed".

Towards the end of the interview, he said, "An extremist is a teetotaler and a vegetarian".

— *Jagbani,*
January 15, 1987.

12. HARJINDER SINGH JINDA (Elder)

One of the most dreaded terrorists, Harjinder Singh Jinda (or elder Jinda), was born in Gidali village of Amritsar district about 27 years ago. He was a second year BA student when he left studies and joined a gang of smugglers. This gang trafficked in narcotics and gold. The first police case registered against Jinda was for pushing a farmer's tractor into a canal after the farmer refused to loan him some money. Forced to give up his "trade" following a crackdown on smuggling activities on the Indo-Pak border, Jinda took to terrorism in 1983 and became a close aide of Bhindranwale.

He and his accomplices became close aides of Bhindranwale in the Golden Temple and carried out many killings with arms supplied by Bhindranwale. He also committed many robberies.

He was arrested by the Delhi Police in December 1985. He escaped from police custody while being taken from Sabarmati Central Jail to Ahmedabad Jail.

According to sources, Jinda slipped into Pakistan for the first time after his sensational escape from Gujarat. He came back to India after meeting Gurjit Singh, convener of the rival faction of the All-India Sikh Students Federation.

The intelligence agencies have information that Jinda organised a group of terrorists who mainly operate in Delhi. They all are believed to be clean-shaven, like Jinda himself. The group is known as the "Delhi-walas."

In the first instance, Jinda had aligned himself with the Babbar Khalsa group. Later he joined the Khalistan Commando Force (KCF) which is headed by "General" Labh Singh alias Sukhdev Singh alias Sukha Sipahi. Perhaps he continued to maintain his links with the Babbar Khalsa also.

Jinda was nabbed in Delhi on August 30, 1987. On September 7, 1987, the Delhi Police raided a house in Mohali (in Punjab, near Chandigarh) and seized about 1.25 kg of gold valued at Rs 3 lakh from a house once used by Jinda. The gold was dug up from the courtyard of the house (No. 345 in Phase 3-A of Mohali). The house had been purchased by Jinda from its owner Ashok Kumar and was registered in the name of a woman. Nobody was in the house when the raid was carried out. It was believed that the house was searched on the information given by Jinda and Satnam Singh Bawa to the Delhi Police.

— Based on reports in *The Tribune*,
April 19, 1987; September 2, 8 and 11, 1987)

13. JATINDER SINGH GHUMMAN

Jatinder Singh Ghumman was one of those terrorists who were killed by terrorists themselves. He was shot dead in February 1986 for the "crime" of having parted company with them.

Jatinder Singh belonged to village Ghumman Kalan, P S Dhariwal in District Gurdaspur. His father, Harbans Singh Ghumman comes of a traditional Akali family. In 1957, he was elected to the Punjab Assembly. When Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's influence began spreading in the Gurdaspur district, ex-legislator Harbans Singh and his three sons including Jatinder became his followers. At that time, the family came to be considered as one of the leading supporters of Bhindranwale. They successfully persuaded many youngmen to join the Bhindranwale ranks.

Two brothers of Jatinder Singh are still detained in the Jodhpur jail.

It is believed that the gang which committed a big and daring robbery at the Batala Depot of the Punjab Roadways was led by Jatinder Singh. He was also the main culprit responsible for the

Chheena bus incident. A bus going from Amritsar to Pathankot was hijacked by the terrorists and a number of passengers (eight or so) belonging to the minority community were shot dead. The site at which this ghastly crime was committed is only about 2 kilometres from village Ghumman and is about 12 kilometres from Batala.

After Surjeet Singh Barnala formed his Government, he visited village Ghumman and was able to win over to his side the ex-legislator. Harbans Singh Ghumman was made one of the vice-presidents of the Akali Dal (Longowal) and the chairman of a State Corporation.

Jatinder Singh was shot dead when he was travelling on a scooter along with an Akali leader. He was shot dead because he knew many terrorists and it was suspected that he might betray them after his father had crossed over. Jatinder too had been won over. He had been made a member of the Gurdaspur district committee formed by the Government to give jobs to the "misguided" Sikh youths as a part of the effort to bring them back into the mainstream. His widow was appointed to fill vacancy. Chief Minister Barnala personally attended the *Bhog* ceremony of Jatinder Singh. This evoked considerable criticism from some circles because Jatinder Singh was known in the area as the main culprit responsible for the Chheena bus *kand*. Notwithstanding that, the Government High School of village Ghumman was named after him. The link road between Naushehra Majja Singh and Ghumman too was named after Jatinder Singh. A gate in his honour was also constructed. The gate happened to be very near the spot where the ghastly crime known as Chheena bus *kand* was enacted. However, soon after this, the ex-legislator father of Jatinder Singh deserted the Akali Dal led by Barnala and joined the United Akali Dal which was then led by Baba Joginder Singh, father of the late Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. This United Akali Dal later on became a part of the Unified Akali Dal floated by the Sikh priests with Simaranjit Singh Mann as its president.

Harbans Singh Ghumman is not a big landlord. He owns about 5-10 acres of land. He has been having off and on poultry farms too. Jatinder Singh was well educated. He had done post-graduation.

— June 19, 1987

14. KARAJ SINGH

On August 17, 1986, some terrorists had attacked some clean shaven industrial workers not very far from Chheharta (Amritsar). They were returning to their villages. As a result of this attack, one died. Another, Baldev Singh of village Dhattal had become totally incapacitated for life. A few others had received injuries which healed in due course. Loss of life would have been greater but for the presence of mind and courage of one who warned others. Soon after the incident, one of the killer gang was nabbed by the police. He split the beans. It was only then that it became known that Karaj Singh, son of Makhan Singh of village Thande had joined the terrorists.

A Sikh Jat, Makhan Singh owns about 5 acres of land. He has three sons and two daughters. All the three sons are married, Karaj being the middle one. Of the two daughters one is unmarried.

Five acres of land cannot yield a large income. However, Makhan Singh was able to have his own tube-well about five years ago. About three years ago he purchased his own tractor.

Not one of the three sons is much educated. All three can only read and write Punjabi. One of the three sons had managed to go to one of the Gulf countries. It is believed that he sent his father lot of money from there. He returned sometime ago. Another son had joined the Army. He got retirement sometime back.

Karaj Singh lived in UP for sometime and worked there as a driver. It is believed in the village that he too did well and helped the family. The family is thus by no means poor. It is a joint family.

Hardly 25 years old, Karaj has a year-and-a-half old son. After it came to be known that he had joined the terrorists, Karaj disappeared. He is reported to be living in the Golden Temple ever since.

About four months ago, a group of three came to the village Thande. They asked for the house of Makhan Singh. It was during the day. There was no male member in the house. One of the group asked for water. As she turned to fetch it, Makhan Singh's wife was shot dead. Her daughter-in-law, wife of Karaj, tried to raise an alarm. She too was shot at. She was injured but survived.

Police came to the village. There was a big gathering of people, a large number having come even from nearby villages. A police officer told the family and the entire gathering that Karaj Singh was in the Golden Temple. He also gave the number of the room in which he was living. This police officer further stated that Karaj Singh could give a clue as to the killers of his mother. Obviously, the police believed that the killing was connected with some infighting amongst the terrorists in the Golden Temple. Makhan Singh and his family had some land dispute with another Sikh Jat, Khazan Singh, of the same village. The family believed and said that most likely the other party in the dispute was behind the killing. This family has generally good reputation in the village. In any case, the police did not accept this theory.

A month or so before the murder of the mother of Karaj Singh, Khazan Singh had married off one of his daughters to some one belonging to a family which lives on the border of two villages of Amritsar district, Galwali and Virpal. Not long after the murder of the mother of Karaj Singh, one of the sons of Khazan Singh had gone to his sister's in-laws to bring her to Thande so that she could spend sometime with her parents. A group of terrorists struck there. Khazan Singh's son, his son-in-law and the father of his son-in-law were shot dead. It is commonly believed that this was the terrible revenge by Karaj (and his gang) for his mother's murder. One of the bullets fired by the terrorists had hit one of the killers' group. He was injured but his co-terrorists managed to take him along with them.

Some of those who visit the Golden Temple and know Karaj Singh say that he is now a Jathedar there and wears a big kirpan.

The police had taken into custody Makhan Singh and one of his other two sons and had also seized their tractor in order to get at or force surrender of Karaj Singh. The trick did not work and those taken into custody were let off. Later on, however, this brother of Karaj Singh was arrested and he is now in jail. According to the police he too is a terrorist.

Some in the village say that the *langer* for the gathering at the funeral of Karaj's mother had come from the Golden Temple. Recently, a new Nishan Sahib has been put up. About 5,000 bricks have also arrived at the site from somewhere. The general belief in the village is that a new gurdwara to perpetuate the memory of the deceased mother of Karaj Singh would be constructed in due course.

Some years ago for sometime at least Makhan Singh was supposed to be a sympathizer of Left. He would even contribute for various *morchas*. He often abuses Karaj Singh and his brother in jail for having gone astray and for having heaped miseries on the family. Some believe that he does it sincerely. Some are of the view that he has really not denounced his terrorist son(s).

— June 11, 1987.

15. KIRPAL SINGH

Naushehra Pannuan, a big village or a small town in Amritsar district, figured prominently in the national press for migration of a large number of Hindu families. There is near unanimity amongst the sober sections of the people of this village that the person mainly responsible for this migration was 51-year old Kirpal Singh, son of Balwant Singh of village Chaudhriwala which is adjacent to Naushehra Pannuan.

During the first week of October 1986 or thereabout the newspapers in Punjab headlined the news that Kirpal Singh had been shot dead during the preceding night in one of his fields. His killers had taken away his pistol which was without a legal licence.

What sort of man this Kirpal Singh was? Who killed him? Efforts made to find out answers to these questions have proved rewarding as some very instructive facts have been found.

Kirpal Singh was Jat by caste. He had inherited only 4 or 5 acres of land. During fifties he joined the Punjab Police as a constable. He left the police force in 1961. Some say that he was dismissed but that needs verification.

During the 1962 Assembly elections he worked actively for the Akali candidate Mohan Singh Tur against the Congress candidate Partap Singh Kairon. As is well known, Partap Singh Kairon was the Chief Minister of Punjab for many years. His P.A. Major Singh too became a well known figure. Major Singh was also P.A. to Chief Minister Devi Lal in 1978. Kirpal Singh was relation of Major Singh.

Kirpal Singh acquired 4-5 acres of more land (in addition to what he had inherited) by means which were questionable to say the least. Some land was purchased by him with money he had made when he arranged sale of someone else's land to a third party. Some more land he purchased with money he made when he arranged the surrender of a smugglar-cum-terrorist not long ago. His wife also inherited some land from her father. This was sold and with this money some land was purchased in Naushehra Pannuan.

He was taken into custody at the time of Operation Bluestar. Some CPI(M) comrade of the area was also taken into custody. The Communists had gone in a deputation to a police officer to demand the release of the CPI(M) comrade. The deputation also enquired about Kirpal Singh. This police officer's reply was: "You need not worry about him. He is our own man."

This was the first indication that Kirpal Singh was playing a double game and was a sort of double agent — a fact which became known very widely later on.

The following extracts which throw considerable light on his activities are from an article which appeared in the CPI weekly *New Age* of July 20, 1986.

"In November 1984 there appeared one poster on the walls of the town (Nasushehra Pannuan), which among other things threatened 21 Hindu families of liquidation. On these families reporting the matter to government authorities, some enquiry was conducted. The DSP (CID), Amritsar, assured the Hindu people (those threatened) that nothing would happen.

"But at the same time he advised them to conciliate or arrive at some agreement with Kirpal Singh, son of Balwant Singh. This Kirpal Singh had links with the extremists and served as informer to the extremists....

"This Kirpal Singh (had) tried to incite the Sikh community of Naushehra Panwa by giving very provocative speeches upon the death of one Sansi of this town in Operation Bluestar with a view to creating tension in the town.

"On the brutal murder of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, this very Kirpal Singh distributed sweets among his community.

"In November 1984, Kirpal Singh organised demonstration of the extremists against the deployment of the CRPF. Further, when Sant Longowal was assassinated Kirpal Singh distributed sweets again. Whenever there is 'Guru Parva' in the Gurdwaras of the town he delivers most poisonous and provocative speeches....

"Harbhajan Singh Sandhu, Minister for Agriculture in the Punjab Government, paid a visit to Naushehra on May 18, 1986 to express sympathies with the affected families (i.e. families of persons shot dead by terrorists). On that occasion 71 persons represented to the Minister and told him that unless Kirpal Singh, who is an agent of the extremists, is apprehended and thrown behind the bars, there cannot be peace in this area and the town. Among these 71 were Hindus, Sikhs and Harijans also. The Minister instructed the DSP Apar Singh, who was accompanying the Minister to arrest Kirpal Singh. But till today Kirpal Singh has not been arrested."

In fact he was never arrested—till his death. This DSP Apar Singh was transferred after tremendous public agitation. The allegation against him was that he was virtually in league with the extremists.

One police officer of the rank of SP too is a distant relation of Kirpal Singh. Many believe that this officer too helped Kirpal Singh.

On September 24, 1986, Governor Siddharth Shankar Ray visited Naushehra Pannuan. Kirpal Singh met him. One police constable gave out the story that Kirpal Singh had assured the Governor that he would help the authorities to apprehend Gurbachan Singh Manochal, one of the five top most leaders of the terrorists carrying a prize of Rs one lakh. It was also given out that Kirpal Singh had shown to the Governor all the certificates given to him by the police recognising his services as (Police) informer.

It is reported that on September 29, 1986 Kirpal Singh again met the Governor this time at Chandigarh.

Soon after this he was shot dead. Those in the know of things point out a significant fact. Kirpal Singh had been at loggerheads with Gurbachan Singh Manochal. The root cause of the dispute was the land on which Manochal had started the construction of a gurdwara-cum-*dera*. The land belonged to the Panchayat Manochal had (forcibly) taken possession of it. The Panchayat dared not do anything. Kirpal Singh too, it is said, had an eye on this land.

One theory is that Kirpal Singh was shot dead by Manochal's terrorists. There is another theory. It is said that quite a few persons had personal enemity with him and he was shot dead by one such party. The family supports this theory. Interestingly, there are not many takers for the third theory that the police got him killed. Neither Badal nor anyone else like him has spoken about the killing of Kirpal Singh.

It is believed that Kirpal Singh himself had not killed anyone. He was only a double informer. He claimed to belong to the United Akali Dal of Baba Joginder Singh.

A few words about his family.

His two sons have been farmers having not much interest in active politics. His third son had joined extremists and at one time was one of the bodyguards of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. It is said that he often advised his father to give up his role of a police informer. It is also reported that subsequently this son too parted company with the extremists and since then has been working as a farmer.

— *India Press Agency,*
November 11, 1986.

16. MANBIR SINGH and ASSOCIATES

Most of the Sikh youths taking to terrorism belong to the lower middle class Jat families who dropped out from school or college early in life and were later unable to get gainful employment.

There are at present numerous separatist and terrorist organisations in Punjab headed by selfstyled "generals" and "commanders". But perhaps among the first terrorists to gain prominence after Operation Bluestar was Manbir Singh alias "General Hari Singh", (now in detention) of Chaheru village in Jalandhar district. His early life and educational background resemble most others who later took to the gun.

Manbir Singh (28) was educated up to the ninth class after which he took *amrit* from Nihal Singh "Harianbelanwale" and started wearing the robes of a Nihang. He later gave up this dress and joined the *jatha* of the late Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He was the latter's personal bodyguard for many months but during Operation Bluestar was "on leave" in his village.

Dhanna Singh alias Balbir Singh of Khaira Majha Singh village in Jalandhar district, who was a member of the "Panthak Committee" which made the declaration of 'Khalistan' in April last, also belongs to a farming family. He studied up to middle class and soon after took *amrit* from a *jatha* of Sant Jarnail Singh.

Another "Panthic Committee" member in detention now, Aroor Singh alias Gurdial Singh of Dhalla village in Gurdaspur district, is about 29-years-old and is a matriculate. Although he had passed a diploma course (tractor mechanic) from the ITI at Qadian in Gurdaspur district, he was doing farming before being drawn into extremist activity. He was among those who were behind the Khudda bus killings last year.

For the police the most wanted man is Sukhdev Singh alias Sukha "Sipahi", who operates under the name of "General Labh Singh". He heads the self-styled "Khalistan Commando Force". Sukhdev Singh (35) belongs to Panjwat village in Amritsar district and after his matriculation joined the Punjab Police as a constable reportedly on the recommendation of a senior Congress(I) politician of the area. He chose to leave the police after he was transferred from Amritsar to Bhatinda on suspicion that he was "soft" on extremists. After his resignation from the police in 1983 he started staying in the Golden Temple complex and was arrested from there during Operation Bluestar. He escaped from police custody during a shoot-out at Jalandhar.

Anokh Singh of warring Suba Singh village, who is among the main activists of the Babbar Khalsa group, also escaped from police custody recently. The 30-year-old terrorist, who is a matriculate, was given the job of a Gurdwara Inspector on the recommendation of Bibi Amarjit Kaur of the Akhand Kirtani Jatha.

Tarsem Singh Kohar (26) of Gurdaspur district took admission in Polytechnic Institute, Batala, after his matriculation. However, about that time he got involved in a murder case and had to give up studies.

Gursewak Singh "Babla" of Raikot village in Ludhiana district studied up to the sixth class only. Ranjit Singh 'Baba' of Dyalgarh village in Gurdaspur district was an illiterate.

Another terrorist of Gurdaspur, Manjit Singh of Khajala village, was an eighth class drop-out.

One of his associates in the Khudda bus killings, Major Singh (whose father, Hazara Singh, was the personal assistant to Punjab Minister Major Singh Uboke) belongs to Ammi Shah village in Amritsar district. He studied upto the fifth class after which he worked as a mechanic and labourer for some time until he got employment in the *langer* in the Golden Temple Complex at Rs. 600 per month.

There is the curious case of Roshan Lal "Bairagi" of Varpal village in Amritsar, who converted to the Sikh religion, became a hardcore terrorist. Roshan Lal (who changed his name to Roshan Singh was educated only upto the seventh class. He worked as a linesman in the electricity department for some months before he took to terrorism.

His father, Jagir Dass said that a few months ago their family history could be traced to Banda Bahadur "Bairagi". Now his two remaining sons also tie turbans and sport flowing beards.

There are several instances of Christians converting to Sikhism and taking to terrorist activity in Fasli Kot village of Gurdaspur. They owe allegiance to the Babbar Khalsa group.

Avtar Singh alias Mehtab Singh "Pahalwan" of Jhabal village in Amritsar district, who is in detention, is also an activist of the Babbar Khalsa group. This 28-year-old terrorist dropped out of school after passing the fifth class to look after the family business of dairy farming. The family of three brothers and three sisters started dairy farming as the land holding (four and a half acres) of their father was not adequate to manage a living.

A visit to the homes of Dalbir Singh "Billa" and Roshan Lal in Varpal village will find the families living in abject poverty. Most of the rooms in the houses are *kutcha*.

Not all the terrorists are school dropouts or poor. Balbir Singh of Raipur village in Hoshiarpur district, who was killed last year, belonged to an affluent family. A graduate from the Hoshiarpur DAV College, he joined the law course at Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan. He gave this up in an effort to go to Canada where most of his family members were settled. Incidentally, his brother and brother-in-law are associates of Talwinder Singh Parmar, a militant leader in Canada.

His associate, Ajitpal Singh who was killed with him at Jalandhar last year, was a teenager. He too belonged to an educated family and his father is a senior teacher at a school.

Similarly, militant leaders like Harminder Singh Sandhu, Harinder Singh Kahlon and Satwinder Singh 'Bhola', are highly educated. Some are postgraduates. But their interrogations indicate that they did not go whole hog with the terrorists due possibly to their nursing political ambitions. Harminder Singh Sandhu, for example, was keen on contesting the Vidhan Sabha seat from Ajnala but gradually got sucked into militancy.

— *The Tribune*,
March 25, 1987.

17. MANINDER SINGH

The intelligence agencies of the Punjab extremists have issued instructions to the extremist spies and the extremists to assassinate

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi come what may.

This has been disclosed by an extremist Maninder Singh alias Pushpinder Singh during the interrogation. Maninder Singh has received training in Pakistan. He is reported to have further disclosed that the extremists have floated an intelligence organisation under the fictitious name of Watan Company. This organisation is entrusted with the task of collecting secret information. In India, its president is Aroor Singh.

Maninder Singh has further disclosed that the extremist agencies have their own codes for different jobs and these codes are coined in Pakistan. He is also reported to have said that these days the code given to these intelligence extremist agents and the terrorists is known as *"Wadde Munde Da Wiah"* (The marriage of the elder son) meaning thereby that come what may, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi must be assassinated. The 'Elder Son' points towards Rajiv Gandhi.

During the interrogation he disclosed that he had specifically come to India to coordinate the activities of four extremist organisations active in Punjab.

According to Maninder, the main hinderance in the achievement of 'Khalistan' has been the lack of coordination among these four organisations. Maninder Singh, who is a member of the five-member working committee of the International Sikh Struggle Committee, said that the main objective of this committee was to collect funds abroad to purchase arms and to smuggle the same across the Pakistan border to the terrorists.

He also disclosed during the interrogation that Pakistanis had promised Rs 25 lakh but now, due to reasons best known to them, they were backing out. But Pakistan had agreed to supply the most sophisticated armament, like rocket launchers. According to the information available here, Maninder had been sent to Punjab with a detailed and planned strategy of extremist attacks. On the night between January 5-6, Maninder Singh, alongwith some of his most dangerous friends, entered India from Pakistan through the Manjhiwala checkpost in Krishanpur Sector of Shri Ganganagar district. No sooner did he enter India he was nabbed by the BSF but somehow his other companions managed to reach Punjab. Maninder disclosed that attacks on the security forces and the politicians were part of the new strategy. He admitted that his committee had full information about the attacks on VIPs. A detailed plan had been worked out for attacks on senior politicians in the future, he continued. His friends had already reached Panjab and had been given new directions to consolidate the extremists.

According to Maninder Singh, Pakistanis had stoped the supply of arms since July 1986 because they were of the opinion that terrorists should themselves mobilise their economic resources.

Maninder Singh gave the information that their aim was to bring all the terrorists organizations under the single command of Aroor Singh. Aroor Singh has a secret hide-out in Amritsar district from where he directs the extremist activities in Punjab.

Two of his companions who had entered India with him, had reached Punjab and were busy in bringing all the extremist organisations under the leadership of Aroor Singh and work under his instructions.

Maninder Singh is an M.Sc. from the Panjab University. After Operation Bluestar and both before and after absconding from India he had been receiving training from different people in sophisticated arms and their technology. He takes a keen interest in search for new arms. He himself is not involved in any crime but he confessed to have a hand in the obortive attempts on the lives of the Prime Minister, the President and Robeiro and the assassination of General Vaidya.

— *Punjab Kesari*,
February 4, 1987.

18. MANJIT SINGH 'BHINDI'

Sometime in February 1987, newspapers all over the country carried the news that a dreaded terrorist of Amritsar district, Roshan Lal Bairagi, had managed to escape near Beas river from a spot on G T Road while he was being brought to Amritsar from Delhi by the Punjab police. The very next day, another terrorist, Manjit Singh Bhindi, managed to escape at exactly the same spot from police custody despite the same type of quite tight security. In both cases, the police version was that they had been allowed to get down for easing themselves.

Manjit's father, however, is convinced that he was shot dead.

A non-Jat Sikh, the father Sardool Singh alias Amolak Singh used to be a granthi in Chakno, district Sargodha (now in Pakistan) before India was partitioned in 1947. He is an *amritdhari* Sikh. He took *amrit* before migrating to India and was given the new name Amolak Singh on that occasion.

Amolak Singh, who was appointed as an employee of the SGPC in Amritsar in 1950 is still working in that capacity. He is likely to retire this year. Resident of Mohan Singh Gate, Amritsar, he has four living sons (besides late Manjit Singh) and two daughters. One son and one daughter are still unmarried.

The oldest of the living son is a tailor. The next one earns his living by selling cloth on a cycle. Another is an electrician while the youngest works as a cycle mechanic.

Fourth of the five brothers, Manjit Singh, had studied up to VII class only. He too was an electrician in a private firm and was getting Rs 600 p.m. He was not yet married when he was killed.

According to his father, even as a child he was of a quarrelsome nature. He would often pick up quarrels even with his mother and brothers. Due to this, he was nick-named "Bhandi" which the press has made into "Bhindi".

Manjit knew Satinder "PT" — a notorious smuggler of Amritsar and the two had become quite friendly. Satinder was one of those smugglers with whom Sant Bhindranwale had developed a close nexus to the mutual benefit of both the Sant and the smugglers. Long before Operation Bluestar, Satinder "PT" had started functioning from within the Golden Temple. His attempt to escape from the Golden Temple during Operation Bluestar with lot of money was foiled successfully and he got shot dead, inside the complex itself.

It was through Satinder "PT" that Manjit Singh had come under the influence of Bhindanwale and had become a terrorist. He received his training in the use of weapons in the Golden Temple itself.

His first exploit was in Chheharta (Amritsar). A gang of three or four shot dead on February 24, 1984 one Dharampal and injured one Sardari Lal, both of whom were sitting at a *Chakki* on Subash Road Chheharta. The intended victim was at another *Chakki* and had thus a lucky escape. Two of the terrorists were nabbed thanks to the people of the area. Manjit was one of them.

Even in jail, his behaviour was quite quarrelsome. Once he illegally jumped into another barrack and stabbed one undertrial there.

His father got him released on bail. Thereafter, he began pretending that he had broken with the terrorists but this was really not so. This became clear when sometime in 1986, he was one of the gang that had gone to the Khalsa College, Amritsar, to force release of terrorist Amarjit Singh Chawala, an AISSF leader, who had been brought to his college under police custody from Jail to take his examination. The attempt did not succeed. In the exchange of fire, Chawala got injured while a policeman was killed. Manjit Singh too received bullet injuries but succeeded in escaping.

After this incident he visited his house only once to see his ailing mother. The police came to know and went to nab him. He however, once again succeeded in escaping. His family was subjected to much harassment but it could give no clue to whereabouts of Manjit Singh.

He was arrested on December 12, 1986 from a house in Azad Nagar, Sultanwind Road, Amritsar. He was taken to some districts of Punjab for investigation into cases against him. He escaped or was shot dead when he was being brought back to Amritsar district. He was only 22 at the time. He carried a prize of Rs 1,50,000.

— June 20, 1987.

19. MANJIT SINGH KHAJALA

Manjit Singh Khajala, according to the Punjab police, was the chief culprit in the Khudda bus *kand* in which as many as 24 bus passengers (almost all belonging to one community) were shot dead. This terrorist crime which shocked the entire country was committed on November 30, 1986 near village Khudda in Tanda area of district Hoshiarpur. According to reports in the press he himself got killed on February 12-13, 1987 in an encounter between terrorists and the security forces near Sarai Amanat Khan (Police Station Gharinda), district Amritsar. He was hardly 25 and was still unmarried.

Manjit Singh belonged to a very poor family of Khajala, a big village in Batala sub-division of the border district of Gurdaspur. His father, Uttam Singh, Chheemba by caste (a backward caste) had no land. He earned his living through sale of vegetables in the village moving about on a cycle. His mother supplemented the income of the family by selling pencils, toffees, etc. to the children of the local primary school. She is a physically handicapped woman.

Uttam Singh had three sons and one daughter. The daughter is the youngest of all and is as yet unmarried. The eldest brother, Gurmeet Singh is working in a tailoring shop at Ludhiana and is married. The next brother, Jagdish Singh, is a regular employee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC).

Manjit Singh was the youngest of three brothers. He studied up to middle standard only. Expenses for his education were met by the Granthi of the local gurdwara. The Granthi himself is not a Sikh but is a follower of Naga Sadhus (some of the village gurdwaras having non-Sikh Granthis is a known phenomenon. However, such Granthis are well versed in Sikh scriptures and rituals). Manjit Singh's own parents were too poor to educate him even up to middle standard.

Manjit Singh began spending most of his time with the Granthi; learnt from him to perform *akhand paths* and to perform other Sikh religious functions and duties expected from Granthis.

He began visiting frequently the Golden Temple along with his brother who was a *sewadar* there. The terrorists were in full control of the Golden Temple at that time. He was there at the time of Operation Bluestar but succeeded in escaping.

On the basis of the lists and information the Army got from within the Golden Temple, a vigorous search for him started. Unable to get him, the police took into custody his father, his mother, his sister, both the brothers and his sister-in-law at one time or the other and not necessarily all together. It is alleged by some in the villlage that these people were much harassed by the police. Soon after the police succeeded in arresting him. He fell ill while in Amritsar jail and was sent for treatment to the Guru Nanak Hospital. Possibility of his having managed this admission in the hospital by feigning illness cannot be ruled out. Whatever the case, he is believed to have escaped with handcuffs on from the hospital.

It is alleged by some in his village that his relatives, including his sister-in-law, were thereafter much harassed and subjected to humiliation. It is also said that his father was let off once with orders/promise to produce Manjit Singh within 24 hours. He committed suicide. Manjit Singh could not be arrested. Cases against him were withdrawn by the Barnala Government but he did not return to the mainstream.

There are two versions going round about how he got killed. Some contended that he was killed by some rival group of terrorists. This does not seem correct. The other version is that the police succeeded in nabbing him and shot him dead. According to the SSP Amritsar:

(i) He was shot dead in a genuine encounter.
(ii) He was chief of the so-called "Khalistan Armed Police".
(iii) He carried a prize of Rs. 1 lakh.
(iv) He was the chief culprit in the Khudda bus *kand* and was wanted in as many as 40 murder cases.

These revelations were made by the SSP Amritsar in a press conference.

There has been no apparent improvement in the standard of living of the family. It is believed that the family was given substantial financial help by the extremist organisations at the time of the *bhog* ceremony.

Manjit Singh was generally regarded as a very well behaved boy in his childhood. He never became clean shaven as some other terrorists did.

It needs to be mentioned that Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale had concentrated on some special areas including parts of Gurdaspur district. A number of villages in these areas had become strongholds of extremists as a result of his preachings based on highly falsified version of Sikhism. Khajala was obviously one such village as can be seen from the following:

Long ago Balkar Singh of this village had got killed in an encounter with the police in Chandigarh. His death anniversary is observed in the village every year and a stadium to commemorate his memory is under construction.

One Bittu, son of Piara Singh of this village, was killed in village Chowak Mehta in the trouble which took place immediately after Bhindranwale's arrest in 1981 and when police opened fire. In his memory too there is *akhand path* in the village every year.

Another youngman of the village has been missing for the last two years. It is known that he too is a terrorist. It is not known whether he is alive and if so where exactly he is these days and with which terrorist organisation he is connected.

Three youngmen of this village were arrested with arms in the beginning of 1985 near the Indo-Nepal border while trying to cross over to Nepal. Either they were acquitted by the court or the cases against them were withdrawn by the Barnala Government. They are now active in the *amrit prachar* campaigns sponsored by the extremist organisations.

— *India Press Agency*,
April 17, 1987.

20. NARINDER SINGH CHADHA (Lt Col Retd)

In a midnight raid, the security forces seized a large quantity of arms and ammunition besides highly classified Western Command maps from the residence of a retired Army Officer in Basant Avenue in Amritsar.

Lieut-Col Narinder Singh Chadha (retd) was arrested and a case under relevant clauses of the law was registered against him. He was produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate, M. S. Arora, who remanded him in police custody.

The raid was conducted on the night of April 18, 1987. The same night, the police and the CRPF carried out over 40 raids throughout the district.

Colonel Chadha's name had figured prominently during the interrogation of several terrorists arrested in the recent past, said the SSP, Izhar Alam, who, however, refused to share details or identify the militant group to which the Colonel owed allegiance. Independent enquiries, however, revealed that Babbar Khalsa extremists were in liaison with the Colonel.

The arms, ammunition and maps were displayed at a CRPF company headquarters in Amritsar. Briefing about the seizure, the Commandant, G.G. Airy Sharma, said initially the Colonel showed some resistance but later gave in. He used to live alone in the house, rather a store-house, for the past five to six years. His wife lived separately with her son in Basant Avenue. Mrs Chadha is reported to have told the securitymen that she had "severed all relations" with her husband.

Commissioned in 1943, the Colonel retired in 1975. He was with the Maratha Light Infantry. His son-in-law is in the Army — a dental surgeon. When confronted with the seizures the Colonel pleaded innocence and started weeping, said Sharma.

Among the array of items on display were one 12-bore gun, one carbine and one Belgium-made rifle, besides two pistols. Also on display were over 2,000 cartridges manufactured abroad.

The security forces had also seized two Army field telephones, portable magneto Type (E-88-B), a large number of empties, two dry primers and gun cotton slabs used for blasting purpose. There were some US dollars besides secret maps of the Army development in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

Besides the maps, there was one 'distances chart' showing the roads in Western Command giving a detailed description of the distance from Leh to Bareilly.

Sharma said the Colonel also had Army field binoculars and gadgets for filling empty 12-bore cartridges. Most of the items were dumped in heaps, some tucked under beds, others in the kitchen and toilet and some packed in containers and boxes.

— *The Tribune,* April 21, 1987

21. RAJIV INDER SINGH 'BHOLA'

Quite sometime ago, newspapers carried a report that involved in bank dacoity in Chheharta (Amritsar) committed by extremists was a grandson of an advocate of Amritsar. These extremists were chased by the residents of the area. The police also acted promptly and the people helped it to nab them.

One of them was a young boy, Rajiv Inder Singh alias Bhola grandson of advocate Basant Singh of village Khaper Kheri a Congressman of long standing.

The village is about 5 kilometres from Chheharta.

There was some property dispute in the family and it seemed the dispute took a bitter form. One day, the whole village and the neighbouring areas were shocked by the news that Bhola's both parents had been consumed by fire. The version of the family was that Bhola's father had set himself and his wife on fire and that perhaps both had by agreement committed suicide. This was generally believed. Some, however, doubted it. The doubting Thomases asserted that they had been killed and burnt by a younger brother of Bhola's father i.e. by an uncle of Bhola. This was refuted by the family.

A report had it that almost immediately after this incident, Bhola left his house and took refuge in the Golden Temple. At that time Sant Bhindranwale reigned supreme there.

Bhola is now reported to have been arrested and is said to be in a Punjab jail (Ed).

Bhola's above mentioned uncle got married in due course. Reports have it that immediately thereafter, Bhola surfaced and shot at his uncle. The family denies that Bhola was the assailant. The injured uncle survived and the case was not pursued. It is believed by many that it was not pursued out of fear of another attack.

Bhola seemed to have become an active terrorist. He was one of the culprits who committed dacoity in the Chheharta branch of the Oriental Bank of Commerce. This was perhaps his first exploit but cannot be sure.

Some of his relations moved for his bail. The court in its wisdom granted the bail.

The family hoped to reform him. But Bhola would have none of that. Soon after he came out of jail on bail, a police officer, Sain Dass, was shot at near Khalsa College, Amritsar. The police officer was seriously wounded but managed to survive. At the time of the bank dacoity in Chheharta, Sain Dass was the SHO incharge of the police station, Chheharta, and it was he who had nabbed Bhola with the help of the people. Sain Dass recognised the assailent and identified him in the FIR.

Bhola, however, could not be trapped. He jumped the bail in the dacoity case and has been at large over since.

Some believe (though some disagree) that Bhola was one of the terrorists responsible for the shoot-out of May 6, 1986 in the Government High School, Wadali Guru, which resulted in four deaths — one clerk and three teachers. One of the teachers belonged to Bhola's own village and was perhaps related to him. This village (i.e. Khapar Kheri) and Wadali Guru are very near to each other. As already stated, police has not yet been able to lay its hands on him.

His grandfather has been virtually bed ridden for quite sometime. The shock which the doings of his grandson have given him, has proved too much for him.

Big majority of the village population too disapproves of his doings. Out of about eight Hindu families of this village, only two have migrated. One has shifted to Chheharta. Only a part of the other families has left the village.

— *India Press Agency*,
August 5, 1986.

22. RANJIT SINGH DAYALGARH

Ranjit Singh, Geja Singh and Makhan Singh were three dreaded terrorists of Gurdaspur. Each of them carried a reward of Rs. 50,000, that is, any one helping to get them nabbed was entitled to get this amount. According to the official claim all three were shot dead about two months ago at village Kalian Bahmanian, P S Batala, Gurdaspur district.

Ranjit Singh Dayalgarh, belonged to village Dayalgarh. His father is not alive. His mother is the *sarpanch* of the village. The family owns 40-50 acres of land. It is a rich peasant family. The agricultural operations in the family land are carried on with the help of tractor, etc. Water for irrigating the fields comes from the family's own tube wells.

Ranjit Singh was about 30 years old when he died. He used to help in the agricultural work of the family before he came under the influence of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He organised many political conferences which were addressed earlier by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and later by Baba Joginder Singh, father of Sant Bhindranwale and head of the United Akali Dal.

Retired Army General Rajinder Singh Sparrow and a former Congress MP also belong to village Dayalgarh. From the main road, a metalled road takes one to village Dayalgarh. At the very start of the link road, a gate in honour of Rajinder Singh Sparrow had been constructed. This was most likely done to honour him for his rôle in the 1965 Indo-Pak war. The gate carried his name. Some time ago the name was effaced and instead the name of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was painted. It is believed that this was the handiwork of Ranjit Singh — perhaps one of his exploits. For two months the gate became "Sant Bhindranwale Gate". Then Bhindranwale's name was also effaced — presumably by the authorities. The gate now carries no name. The incident is perhaps symbolic of the situation in Gurdaspur district at different times, indicating also the limited improvement which has taken place.

Ranjit Singh did not confine himself to such pranks. He indulged in robberies and killings and became one of the dreaded terrorists of the district. At least so it is believed.

There is an interesting story going round the area about the circumstances in which he got killed.

A Congress leader of the district is known to have been involved in many scandals. An ex-armyman, having nothing to do with the extremists, dared to expose some of these scandals. The *neta* was very angry. The story goes that he asked his son to join or contact the terrorists and to get killed this ex-armyman, a Sikh. A bargain was struck. Rs 40,000 was paid in advance for the service to be rendered and Rs 40,000 afterwards, within two years of the "act".

It was in this background, it is said, that the police was informed one day by the *neta* that there were three terrorists in a field of village Kalian Bahmanian and that they should be nabbed. The police went and on return reported that the alleged terrorists were ordinary peasants. The *neta* however was sure of his ground. On that day state police Director General Ribeiro was camping in Batala. It seems that some higher authorities were approached and told that the three persons were not ordinary peasants but the dreaded terrorists named above. This time the CRP was sent. It was after this that the press carried the story that there was an encounter, that the three terrorists were shot dead, and that some arms and ammunition were recovered. Many in the area said that through this clever device the *neta* saved Rs 40,000 which as a part of the bargain was to be paid within two years after the liquidation of the ex-armyman.

Whether the story is 100 per cent correct or has some exaggeration somewhere is difficult to say. But it does not seem to be altogether baseless.

The three officials of the Punjab police who had stated that in the field in question there were only ordinary peasants and no terrorists have since been dismissed.

— *India Press Agency*

23. RANJIT SINGH RANA

Ranjit Singh alias Rana is one of those dreaded terrorists whom the security forces have not yet been able to nab despite serious efforts. He carries a prize of Rs 50,000.

Rana was the chief culprit responsible for the murder of Mohinder Kaur, lady teacher of Tarn Taran in district Amritsar, her two unmarried young daughters and another woman residing in the same house. This crime was committed only a few months ago. The family of widowed lady teacher, Mohinder Kaur, to more or less extent, had got involved with the extremists. Rana was a regular visitor to her house. In the process, he became friendly with one of the daughters who is reported to have joined Rana's gang. A maternal uncle of the girl weaned her and the family away from the extremists. The girl was taken away from Tarn Taran by the maternal uncle. This made Rana furious. And he and his gang had his revenge by murdering the mother, two sisters and another woman residing in the house. This however did not satisfy Rana, even though he had also shot dead a son-in-law of Mohinder Kaur residing in the village Tharu in the Tarn Taran sub-division. Rana himself too, belongs to this village. It was reported that Rana was now out to kill the girl and the maternal uncle.

According to the police Rana was also responsible for the killings of three agricultural labourers at the Mugal Chak farm of Joginder Singh Bajwa. This Bajwa had been shot dead by the terrorists sometime earlier. He was a near relation of Revenue Minister Major Singh Uboke. The killing was a result of infighting between various terrorist groups. Rana with his gang had gone to the farm to kill a son of late Joginder Singh Bajwa. He was then not there. Rana and his gang quenched their thirst for blood by shooting dead three agricultural labourers working on the farm — all three Sikhs belonging to scheduled castes. In this case as also in the case of the family of Mohinder Kaur, Rana's gang had sprinkled kerosine oil on the bullet ridden bodies and set them on fire. All the bodies were found half burnt.

At one stage a large number of people in the Tarn Taran subdivision — both Hindus and Sikhs — received threatening letters under his name. This was during the second half of 1986. Rana had collected big sums of money.

Rana is the fifth out of six sons of Gurdeep Singh, a Jat Sikh, owning about 7 acres of land, in village Tharu about 5 kilometres from Tarn Taran. Rana is as yet only 24 years old and is unmarried. His mother died some years ago. His only sister is married.

The eldest of the sons was a chowkidar in a Cooperative Bank. The next was addicted to opium etc. and was not doing any work. The third was employed in the Homeguards. All three were married. They are not to be found in the village these days. No one seems to know where they have gone. It is believed that they and their families have shifted to some undisclosed places out of fear of police harassment. It does not seem that they themselves had any connections with the extremists. The father too is no longer in the village.

The fourth of the brothers, Inder Pal Singh alias Billu, is a terrorist. The youngest, Harpreet Singh alias Tishu, too had turned terrorist. He was reported shot dead by the police in an encounter.

Rana is a Matriculate. After matriculation, he had obtained a diploma in motor mechanism after two years course in the I.T.I. Sarhali. He then joined Punjab roadways workshop at Tarn Taran as an apprentice. After about three months he left the workshop and joined one of the groups of the All India Sikh Students Federation. In some mutual infighting within the Darbar Sahib Tarn Taran, Rana received bullet injury. Thereafter he shifted to the Golden Temple Amritsar and came under the influence of Bhindranwale.

All those who know him agree that he was never very religious minded. This is also borne out by the fact that he is clean shaven. It is the pull of weapons and spirit of adventure and may be poverty which seemed to have drawn him into the net of terrorists and turned him into a worst type of criminal.

— *India Press Agency*
April 26, 1987

24. ROSHAN LAL 'BAIRAGI'

Roshan Lal Bairagi, aged 25 to 26, a dreaded terrorist of Punjab hit the headlines in newspapers all over the country in February 1987.

There were many cases against him in Delhi as well as in Punjab. He was in the custody of the Delhi Police. The Punjab Police wanted him in Amritsar for interrogation in connection with cases against him in Punjab. After some effort, the appropriate Delhi court permitted his being taken to Amritsar.

It was reported that he would be taken to Amritsar under very tight security. The next day the press carried the news that according to the police, Bairagi sought and was given permission to get down from the vehicle to answer the call of nature, and that taking advantage of this laxity, he managed to escape. This, it was said, happened near the Beas river bridge on National Highway No. 1.

The very next day, another dreaded terrorist Manjit Singh Bhindi was reported to have escaped exactly from the same spot and exactly under the same circumstances. Many disbelieve the police version in both cases. Some believe that both were shot dead. There are some who think that both may still be alive and in the custody of the police itself. Bairagi's father when asked as to what he thought would only say, "*Akal Purkh Janda*" (Only God knows).

What type of a man was Roshan Lal Bairagi? What was his family background? Why and how did he become a terrorist? Why did he join a terrorist group which wants "Khalistan", even though he was a Hindu?

Bairagis are a Hindu Brahmin sect. This particular Hindu sect has closest links with Sikhism. They are generally poor. Some villages in Amritsar district have one or more Bairagi families each. Traditionally, they earn their living by doing daily labour occasionally, begging and performing religious ceremonies on occasions, including in Sikh families. They also 'treat' sick animals by means of 'magic' (known in Punjab as *jantar mantar, tona*, etc).

Roshan Lal Bairagi too came from such a family living in village Varpal of Amritsar district. His father, Jagir Dass, and his mother are still alive. Roshan Lal was or is the elder of Jagir Dass's two sons. Originally this family too lived in the traditional way. They would do daily labour whenever they would get work. For the rest, brewing and selling of illicit liquor became the source of income for making both ends meet. This change however did not mitigate the poverty of the family even to a small extent. Roshan Lal too earned by daily labour and by trading in illicit liquor. He was not married and was living with his father. He may have been in school for 2 or 3 years and was virtually illiterate.

Dalbir Singh Billa of the same village was his closest friend. Billa too was trading in illicit liquor. Roshan Lal used to visit the Golden Temple alongwith Billa off and on. This started in 1984. In the Golden Temple both of them found that the terrorists were held in great awe and all the SGPC employees promptly carried out their orders. Both got drawn to the terrorists and started on the new career by indulging in small dacoities on the Amritsar-Taran Taran road. Both were arrested in 1985, and escaped from the Gurdaspur jail in January 1986.

It is generally believed that both of them placed their services at the disposal of the so-called Panthak Committee which has masterminded many killings. The gang headed by Dalbir Singh Billa killed many in the Tarn Taran sub-division of Amritsar district.

Roshan Lal Bairagi was second in command of the gang.

For some time Roshan Lal's name disappeared from the press. It reappeared when he was arrested in Delhi. According to the Delhi Police he was involved in the murder of a VIP in Delhi. Unlike many such cases, there has been no visible improvement in the living condition of Roshan Lal's family. It lives as poorly as before. Father and brother continue usual professions. The family house remains *kacha*.

— *Link*
March 22, 1987

25. SATNAM SINGH BAWA

Satnam Singh Bawa, a notable member of Harjinder Singh Jinda's gang of terrorists, is widely believed to have betrayed Jinda and to have helped the police to nab him.

According to Ritu Sarin, of the weekly *Sunday*, Bawa originally worked in Amritsar as a refrigeration technician. His report in the September 13-19, 1987 issue of the weekly states that Bawa started committing decoities first in 1985 along with Manjit Singh, a terrorist, and looted around Rs 8 lakhs, from the office of the State Electricity Board in Amritsar. A booty of exactly double the amount was stolen from a Punjab National Bank (PNB) branch in Ludhiana, after which Jinda was convinced that Bawa was worthy of joining his group.

D R Ahuja of the *Tribune* has the following to say about Bawa:

Some new facts have come to light indicating that the arrest of the dreaded terrorist, Harjinder Singh Jinda, resulted from a pre-planned operation prepared meticulously by the Delhi Police with the active cooperation of Jinda's accomplice, Satnam Singh Bawa.

It is also believed that another dreaded terrorist, Anokh Singh, was killed following some vital information given by Satnam Singh Bawa, who is likely to be made an approver in the Ludhiana bank dacoity case, the Lalru bus massacre case, the killing of Amarjit Singh Vohra and in a few other cases masterminded or committed by Jinda.

According to police sources, Satnam Singh became disgusted with Jinda and other members of the "Khalistan Commando Force" following the bank dacoity in which they looted Rs 5.70 crore. Satnam Singh was expecting a bigger share of the loot; he was given only Rs 5 lakh.

Satnam Singh was a laboratory technician in the Punjab Agricultural University. He and his wife have two children. In Ludhiana, he got in touch with members of the "Khalistan Commando Force" under the leadership of "Gen" Labh Singh and participated in many crimes, including the Ludhiana bank dacoity (February 2, 1987). This dacoity, according to Satnam Singh, was masterminded by Labh Singh who wanted a huge amount to buy arms. It is said that there were Rs 20 crore in the bank but they could grab only about Rs 6 crore. After the crime, some differences cropped up between Labh Singh, Jinda, Charanjit Singh, Satnam Singh and Manjit Singh on the sharing of the loot.

Labh Singh took the maximum amount on the pretext of buying arms. Satnam Singh decided to say good-bye to his desperado life. Subsequently, he resigned his job and shifted to Delhi along with his family in April. He rented a house in Noida. While he was thinking of starting life afresh, Jinda contacted him and came to Delhi to stay with him.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police got a tip-off on the shifting of Satnam Singh to Delhi and kept a watch on his movements. They also established a secret link with him. When Satnam Singh told the police that Jinda often visited him, police sought his help for the arrest of Jinda.

According to the police, Satnam Singh lost Rs 60,000 when a call-girl removed his briefcase from a room in a guest house. Satnam Singh is believed to have deposited about Rs 3 lakh in fixed deposit in a bank in Ludhiana.

Satnam Singh told the police that Jinda was always on the move visiting Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan to mastermind killings and dacoities. Jinda was a criminal and smuggler. The police is also understood to have intercepted a truck full of arms at the instance of Satnam Singh. The truck was on its way to Delhi.

— *The Tribune*,
September 6, 1987.

26. SATNAM SINGH 'SATTA'

In April 1987, six members of a Sikh Jat family of village Mal Mauri near Tarn Taran, were shot dead by the terrorists. One was the widowed mother, her married son, her unmarried son and three unmarried daughters of marriageable age. Fourth daughter was injured. The wife and the child of the married son were spared. The terrorists who took the responsibility of these murders said that the married son was an informer. This has been denied by the authorities strongly. The other version is that the unmarried daughters did not enjoy good reputation. One terrorist wanted to have an affair with one of them. She refused. Together the sisters beat him up and complained to the CRPF too. The CRPF men too beat him.

To have his revenge, he spread the story of the brother being an informer. A threatening and warning notice outside the house of the family appeared. No special security was provided and was perhaps not even asked for. Soon after six of the family were done to death.

It is believed by some in the area that Satta Mazbhi was of one of those who committed the gruesome crime.

Terrorist Satnam Singh alias Satta, son of Bachan Singh, belongs to a family of Mazbhi Sikhs of village Kot Dharam Chand Khurd, about 8 kilometres from Tarn Taran on Chabhal Road.

Generally known as Satta Mazbhi, he is hardly 18 and 19-year-old. He is the third of the four sons of his father. The first and the fourth are agricultural labourers. The second son died some years ago in an accident. Satta has a younger sister. All are unmarried. Mother is not alive.

Satta studied in a school for 3-4 years. At present, he can read only Punjabi but cannot write even that. Earlier, he was not observing the external symbols of Sikhism i.e. he was not keeping long hair etc. Even though he started keeping long hair etc after he became a terrorist, he is not known to be very religious minded even now.

It was under the influence of a Sikh Jat youth of his village, Nirmal Singh, that Satta became a terrorist. An ex-*sarpanch* of the village under the influence of religiosity encouraged them till the two snatched away his pistol. This was their first exploit.

In 1986, Nirmal Singh was arrested and sent to jail. Satta joined the terrorist group headed by "Satta-Sansi" a "B" category terrorist as per police lists. Satta Sansi is said to be close to G. S. Manochal who has only recently resigned from the Panthak Committee because of internal infighting. His terrorist group is allied with the "Khalsa Commando Force".

In 1986, Satta Mazbhi abducted a minor girl of his own village.

The family got her back with the help of some persons close to the terrorists. It was about 15 days after her abduction that she came back home escorted by seven-eight armed young terrorists. The girl is now residing with her maternal uncle who belongs the CPI(M). On more than one occasion Satta Mazbhi and his gang have tried to attack the house of this maternal uncle.

The family of Satta Mazbhi no longer lives in the village. Its whereabouts are not generally known. It seems to have left the village out of fear of police and security forces.

Some friends of Satta quote him as having said about two months ago that he was in a very difficult position, having to lead a very hopeless life and did not see anyway out.

Satta is believed to have helped his family financially.

— *India Press Agency,*
May 3, 1987

27. SIMRANJIT SINGH MANN

Simranjit Singh Mann first came into limelight when he was the SSP in Faridkot district in Punjab. Some allege that on more than one occasion he invited Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale to the police lines to address policemen. Some others assert that this is not correct. However, the fact remains that there were widespread allegations about his being in collusion with the terrorists. One specific allegation was that he recommended and got issued licenses for weapons to a number of extremists who had falsely stated in their applications that they were Nirankaris and needed weapons for self-defence or some such thing. It needs to be pointed out that once the SSP recommends the grant of license to a person, the Deputy Commissioner or the authorisd Additional Deputy Commissioner grants the license without holding any further enquiry.

Comrade Jagjit Singh Anand (CPI), then a member of the Rajya Sabha, and Comrade Raj Kumar (CPI), then a member of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha, made devastating exposures of Mann's pro-extremist activities. At that time even though the terrorists had characterised communists as "one of their four enemies", the CPI had not yet been made their priority target. Even in that period one terrorist group was out to liquidate comrades Anand and Raj Kumar. This group consisted of some ex-policemen and some serving policemen. The CPI leaders had reasons to believe that

IPS officer Mann was the organiser of this group and was its patron-in-chief. Be that as it may, there was some enquiry into allegations against Mann.

When Giani Zail Singh became Home Minister of the Central Government, Mann addressed a letter to him and the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In this he asserted: What good can come to a country which has such a corrupt and characterless person as Zail Singh as her Home Minister?

Towards the end of 1981, Simranjit Singh Mann was sent out of Punjab and was posted in Bombay.

In June 1984, at the time of Operation Bluestar, Mann wrote an extremely provocative letter of protest to the President of India. The letter amounted to virtual resignation. After completing the legal formalities, he was dismissed. Some cases also stood registered against him. He went underground but was arrested while trying to cross Indo-Nepal border.

When he was posted at Bombay, many raised the question as to why he was not being dismissed. His family conections perhaps would explain this.

Simranjit Singh Mann was born in a traditionally pro-British family. The British rulers of India had conferred on his father Joginder Singh Mann, a big landlord, the honorary title of Colonel.

After 1947, Sardar Joginder Singh Mann and his family migrated from Shahdra and settled in Fatehgrah Sahib. Joginder Singh Mann came close to the Maharaja of Patiala and became his loyal supporter. After his selection as an IPS officer, Simranjit Singh Mann got married to one of the daughters of Sardar Gian Singh Kahlon, ICS, then Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab. Another daughter of Sardar Gian Singh Kahlon — who during the British rule was a member of the steel framework of their administration — is married to Sardar Amrinder Singh, son of Maharaja of Patiala, a former Congress(I) MP and at present a leader of the UAD. A sister of Amrinder Singh is married to Natwar Singh, at present a member of Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet.

Sometime back, Simranjit Singh Mann even while in jail was put up as a candidate for membership of the Rajya Sabha. Barnala was the Chief Minister then. There was general consensus in Punjab that Mann's victory would give a strong impetus to extremism. He lost narrowly.

In an article in *Dehati Janata*, a Punjabi weekly (issue dated July 1, 1987), edited by a staunch follower of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, it is stated that Mann was extremely hesitant to sign the oath pledging loyalty to the Indian Constitution without which his nomination paper could not have been accepted as valid. According to the said article, Mann was prevailed upon after much effort by his relatives who were keen to get him out and who were sure that if elected he would have to be released.

Recently the press carried the news that Simranjit Mann had sought an interview with the Prime Minister. This, the above referred to article asserts, was done by Mann at the instance of his lawyer.

An officer who had once worked with Mann once expressed the view that "Mann is an extremely emotional person and personally honest. He has gone astray. His mishandling by the Government also made some contribution in his going astray."

Irrespective of the correctness or otherwise of this assessment, the article in Bhuler's weekly deplores "the fact that Mann's image has been very much damaged by his relatives". This article also makes the forecast that the Government of India "would release Mann only after he has been completely brainwashed".

— *India Press Agency*,
July 13, 1987.

28. SUKHDEV SINGH 'SUKHA'

This is the story of a dreaded terrorist whose death in May 1986 remains a mystery. Sukhdev Singh alias Sukha of village Sakhira of Tarn Taran sub-division in Amritsar district, was only 25 years old when he was killed.

He was born in a poor peasant family. His father, Budh Singh, owns only about five acres of land. Budh Singh has the reputation of being a short tempered and a desperate man. In the early 60s, Budh Singh, his elder brother, and another person, went to a fair *(mela)* in a nearby village. They had taken some intoxicant. A young man returning from the fair accused them of having stolen watermelons from his fields. There was an altercation. Budh Singh and his companions murdered the young man with *kirpans*. All three were convicted — Budh Singh to seven years imprisonment.

According to his friends, Sukha too inherited the temperament of his father. At school he often quarreled with his teachers. After passing the 5th class or the 6th class he gave up studies. Thereafter, he began to help the family on agricultural land. In 1982 he came under the influence of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. Consensus among those who knew him intimately is that he was attracted towards Bhindranwale not so much because of the latter's religious sermons but by the attraction for weapons.

His first exploit was in 1984. Just close to Gurdwara Baba Mai Dass in his village there was a *samadhi.* Sukha demolished it. There was resentment in the village but no one challenged him. Outside the village there was another *samadhi* known as Mata Rani. Not only Hindus but also Sikhs would pay their respects while passing by. Sukhdev Singh demolished this *samadhi* too. The village had three more similar places of worship, two of these were in that part of the village which is inhabited by agricultural labourers. Sukha declared that he would demolish these too. The agricultural labourers took up the challenge and declared that they would defend their places of worship. Sukha beat a retreat.

From then onwards, he began visiting the Gurdwara every day and would do religious preachings. He became a frequent visitor to the Golden Temple also. He vacillated between becoming a member of Babbar Khalsa and remaining a follower of Bhindranwale.

At the time of Operation Bluestar he escaped from the Golden Temple. He returned to his village and began to live in obscurity. When he found that the police was looking for him, he disappeared. From then onwards his name began figuring in the newspapers in connection with murders, attempts to murder, etc. By middle of 1985, he had become a dreaded terrorist. Many people in the area believed that he was very close to a Cabinet-rank Minister of the Akali Government headed by Barnala.

It is also said that he was more than once seen in the official car of this Minister. Even when he was wanted by the police he would often sleep at the police stations during the nights. Some assert that the houses of even some Hindu families were used by him as hide-outs.

He was one of the main persons behind the move to set up a five-member committee to look after Panthak affairs. Later on, however, he developed serious differences with this committee, especially with one of its members.

Sukhdev Singh Sakhira, as he had come to be known, was shot dead in May 1986 near the famous Gurdwara Shaheedan in Amritsar city. The police version is that it was the result of infighting in the terrorist group to which Sakhira belonged. Some believe that it was the police which shot him dead.

There are others who hold the opinion that a member of the Panthak Committee with whom he had developed serious differences was responsible for the assassination.

Some are not prepared to rule out the possibility that his Minister-friend got him liquidated to guard against the possibility of his being arrested and spilling the beans. One cannot say when the truth will be known.

Sukhdev Singh Sakhira has not left behind any issue. He did get married but deserted his wife soon. She then married Sukhdev's elder brother. He died and the lady left the family and married some one else.

Ironically, the body of Sukhdev Singh Sakhira was cremated just close to the site of the *samadhi* which he had demolished as his first exploit.

— *New Age*,
October 26, 1986

29. SURJIT SINGH

Surjit was a strong lad, broad of shoulder and swift of foot. Everyday he would burn the tracks at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium till he was crowned Delhi's junior champion over 800 metres. Politics meant very little to him. Today, he is one of the most wanted killers in the country. He is said to be the lone gunman who shot 14 persons in South Delhi in June 1987.

Everything changed for Surjit Singh in 1985. There were rumours that terrorists of the stature of Harjinder Singh Jinda were staying at his house. His parents were arrested in connection with the transistor bombs case. One day, the athlete did not report for training.

Surjit had been a bright student. He had secured over 70 per cent marks in his class XI exams from S S Khalsa School. In 1985, he was weaned away to Guru Harkishan Public School. His talent as an athlete assured that. He attended that school for only 10 days in the year.

"He changed drastically after his parents were arrested", said a boy who used to run with him. "He used to move around with toughs and we were even afraid to speak to him".

Surjit has always been aggressive. In school, he was known to jump into fights even when they were not his own. Only 5 ft 3 inches tall, he had bashed up for bigger boys'far too often. But now this teenager from Gobindpuri whose father, a driver, was in jail, was resorting to petty crime.

Surjit was arrested along with four boys on October 23, 1985, for planning a dacoity in South Delhi. A couple of knives and an ice-pick were recovered from them. It was purely a gang of criminals, with no communal bias. Even earlier, Surjit and his band had been known to have indulged in petty thefts.

Interestingly, he still loved athletics. After the law let him off, he returned to Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and wanted to start training. The authorities turned him out. "He literally wept and fell on his knees, but we could not permit criminals to spoil the boys here", an official said. The next they heard of Surjit was that he had gone to Punjab with his two younger brothers.

The Punjab visit completed the metamorphosis that had set about in the young man's personality. He was seen in the stadium once or twice after that, but spoke only to members of his own community. He openly snubbed others who greeted him.

In 1986, Surjit created another ripple at the National Stadium even though he was not present. Plainclothesmen caught hold of another young man and paraded him through the Stadium asking people whether he was Surjit. "We knew then that he had become a confirmed criminal", an athlete said.

Surjit's fingerprints were lifted from the Datsun car used for the June 13 killings. Eyewitnesses spoke of the teenaged killer whose sten gun had spewed death. Policemen were back at the stadium asking about Surjit and athletes knew that the "800 metres boy" had done something again.

Today, they freeze at the very mention of his name. A request for his photograph can end a conversation. The only one who agreed to part with it was a boy who had finished third when Surjit had won the Delhi state title.

There are others, though, who still can't believe it. "He used to touch my feet whenever he saw me and never misbehaved on the track", said a man who once coached him.

Another gentleman, who knew him well, insists that it was Surjit's decision to move from a government-run school to a public school which was his undoing. "The boy could not adjust to an English-medium school with its rich, snobbish boys snubbing him all the time. He stopped attending classes, and when his father was jailed he took to crime for survival. After athletics rejected him, he had nowhere to go. He was not a murderer. They must have brain washed him in Punjab", he says.

And thus a terrorist was born.

— *Indian Express*
July 12, 1987

30. TARSEM SINGH KOHAD

Tarsem Singh Kohad was born in the village Kohad in the district of Gurdaspur. The village falls under the Qadian Police Station. He belongs to a Jat Sikh middle peasant family. One of his brothers owns and runs the Kohad Bus Service which operates between Batala and Kahnuwan. It is a mini bus. Earlier he owned a taxi. Tarsem Singh is related to Ranjit Singh Dayalgarh whose cousin sister is married to him (Tarsem Singh), previously their economic condition was weak but now the same has improved. Having passed his matriculation, he joined the Government Polytechnic, Batala.

His first crime was a murder in the polytechnic itself, but no case was registered against him due to the intervention of some Minister. Later on he established links with the late Sant Bhindranwale.

The first major act of terrorism committed by him and his group was the Chinina bus massacre. Others involved in it were Jatinder Singh Ghuman, Gurmej Singh Ghuman and Ranjit Singh Dayalgarh. Later he was involved in scrores of incidents. He became a terror in the whole of the area. He and his group were using stenguns for their crimes. Kohad was the leader of the group and self-styled general of the Khalistan Commando Force. In most of the villages of Dhariwal and Kahnuwan blocks, he recruited a good number of youngmen for his force. They shot dead many an innocent people. He was arrested alongwith a girl by the BSF on a tip-off while travelling in a bus near the Bidhipur railway crossing near Jalandhar. Since then he has been in jail. The girl, it was found out used to work as a weapons carrier.

31. WARYAM SINGH KHAPPIANWALI

The Muktsar bus massacre, near village Kamanwali in Faridkot district on July 25, 1986 in which 15 passengers were brutally shot dead by the Khalistani terrorists shook the country and had serious repercussions even outside Punjab, especially in Delhi. Among the killers responsible for this shoot-out was Waryam Singh Khappianwali — who had generally come to be known as "Waryama."

One of the most dreaded terrorists of district Faridkot, he was shot dead in a police encounter when he was hardly 21 years old. "Shot-dead in encounter", was of course the police version. One of the two groups of the AISSF issued a statement challenging this version. According to the AISSF, Waryama had been shot dead by the police not in an encounter but after he had been captured by it. Interestingly, one of the leading Punjabi dailies of Punjab carried an advertisement in the name of his father inviting people to the *bhog* ceremony of Waryam Singh. It mentioned his death in police encounter.

Waryam was one of the nine issues of his father, Jathedar Harnam Singh. He was the eldest of the six sons.

Jathedar Harnam Singh owns about 30 acres of land and can easily be counted in the category of rich peasants. The family lives in a farm house called "Dham" — a sort of a bungalow — in village Khappianwali. Agriculture is the main business of the family. It also keeps a number of buffaloes and sells milk.

In 1983 or so, Waryam Singh was a student of Government College, Muktsar. Some of his class fellows recollect that he was often involved in brawls. Once he and his friends had a quarrel with some Hindu students. He tried to frighten the latter with a toy pistol. The opposite group had somehow come to know that the pistol Waryama had was a toy pistol. So they were not frightened or scared. On the contrary, Waryam and his friends were given a sound thrashing. They were then taken to the Principal who was asked to take action against them. Waryam left the college.

Soon after, he came under the influence of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. At the time of Operation Bluestar, Waryam Singh was arrested from within the historic gurdwara at Muktsar. Bhai Shaminder Singh who is now an M.P. and belongs to the Badal faction of the Akali Party, helped to get him out on bail.

Jagjit Singh Rode, a brother of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was run over by train and died. Waryam with many others was going in a truck for the *bhog* ceremony. There were of course provocative slogans. A confrontation took place on the way to Rode in Muktsar with a group of Hindus. Police had to intervene and open fire. Three were injured, one of them died in the hospital. The gruesome Muktsar bus massacre was supposed to be Waryam's revenge. He had a number of other "exploits" to his credit but the Muktsar bus massacre was perhaps his "greatest" one. It was sometime after the Muktsar incident that Waryam was reported shot dead by the police on Kotkapura-Jaitoo Road in Faridkot district.

— June 5, 1987

32. WASSAN SINGH

One of the five-member "Panthak Committee", Wassan Singh, carries a reward of Rs 1 lakh. About 30 years old, he is married and has two children. He belongs to village Zafarwala which is situated about three miles away from Dhariwal in Gurdaspur district. He comes from a Sikh Jat peasant family. His father owns about five acres of land, and agricultural operations are generally carried on with the help of animals and plough.

Some years ago, a gathering of Nirankaris held in Ghumman village was disturbed and even disrupted by Sikh fundamentalists. The Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur district at that time was a Nirankari. The Sikh fundamentalists were quite angry with him for his way of functioning and conduct. During this period Sant Bhindranwale had toured many villages in the area and persuaded youngmen to take *amrit.* He had also visited Zafarwal. It is perhaps then that the young Wassan Singh came under Bhindranwale's influence.

Wassan Singh got a job in the New Egerton Dhariwal Woollen Mills. He had studied only up to middle stage or perhaps even less. He was an unskilled worker in the mills and his average wage would not exceed Rs 500/600 per month. He had worked in the mill for about four years when he left the job. There are more than one union in the mill. He was not an active worker of any of the trade unions.

His father is known as a supporter of the Akalis. However, it is not known whether or not Wassan Singh was a member of even the Akali led union.

There is a story commonly believed about him. Police had once nabbed a friend of his, an opium addict who had an unlicensed revolver. During interrogation he told the police that his revolver was with Wassan Singh. The police recovered the revolver but did not register a case. This was in May 1984 or thereabouts.

After he left the New Egerton Mills, Wassan Singh became an active follower of Bhindranwale. For some time he disappeared but after some time he made his existence felt. One view is that he personally has not indulged in killings.

— *Patriot,*
November 6, 1986

6. Other Terrorists

Ribeiro disclosed that terrorist gangs had paid Rs 25,000 for each stengun and a much higher price for the medium machine-gun...

He said the supply of these arms had been arranged by a notorious arms smuggler of Faridkot district, known as Nila. The police had launched a hunt for him...

— *Tribune,* April 19, 1987.

Some of the terrorists who took part in the Rs 5.70 crore bank robbery in Ludhiana in February have links with some VIPs, according to sources in the CBI team probing the robbery...

Manjit Singh Manju is the son of a gazetted officer in the Punjab Education Department who resides behind Aanam Cinema in Amritsar.

— *Indian Express,* April 24, 1987.

Harpreet Singh, a former MLA and son of the Minister of State for Local Government, Punjab, Mohinder Singh Sianwala, was arrested on saturday by the CBI for a criminal case registered against him in Rajasthan, official sources said here today...

Earlier, Harpreet Singh had been arrested on February 7 last along with Aroor Singh, chief of "Khalistan Liberation Force", and Satwinder Singh Bhola, a member of the All-India Sikh Students'

Federation (AISSF), while they were on their way to Muchhal village in Amritsar district to attend a marriage. The arrest followed an encounter with the police in which a terrorist Sher Singh was killed.

— *Indian Express,* April 29, 1987.

A former Army officer turned extremist, arrested in connection with the biggest ever Punjab National Bank robbery here (Ludhiana) in February last has confessed that he received Rs 10 lakh as his share from the looted booty of Rs 5.70 crore.

He told his interrogators that he "kept sitting in a Maruti van along with two others armed with sophisticated weapons outside the bank premises on the day of the robbery, police sources said.

He was entrusted with the task of shooting down anyone found attacking the terrorists engaged in the robbery, the sources added.

Balbir Singh was nabbed by the CBI from Transport Nagar here on April 28 and remanded in its custody by the Judicial Magistrate till May 10...

— *The Tribune,* May 2, 1987.

A dismissed Army Major Jagjit Singh who was associated with the Damdami Taksal, was arrested from his residence in Sector 21 in Chandigarh by a police party from Amritsar today. The police said he was one of the three accused wanted in connection with the killing of a member of the SGPC Task Force, Avtar Singh, inside the Golden Temple Complex in June last year. He was taken for interrogation.

— *The Tribune,* May 16, 1987.

Nawan Zamana (Pubjabi daily from Jalandhar) carried a report in its issue of May 16, 1987 about the killing of one Prem Singh of Shaheed Udham Singh Nagar of Amritsar on May 9, 1987. He was shot dead when his wife and children had gone to the house of a neighbour to watch TV. The responsibility of the killing had been taken by the 'Khalsa Commando Force'. Saggu, a very well informed correspondent of *Nawan Zamana,* asserted in his report that the killing was done by hiring one at the instance of two persons who had personal motives. According to Saggu, one of these had already been nabbed by the police.

Jalandhar police registered yet another success when it busted two gangs of terrorists and one gang of burglars by arresting 12 members and recovering 10 fire-arms along with ammunitions, besides 9 scooters and stolen goods valued at Rs one lakh....

Addressing a news conference, the SSP identified the accused as Manjit Singh, Narinder Singh, Amarjit Singh, Kulwinder Singh and Major Singh belonging to the gang of the Bhupinder Singh, son of an army captain. Bhupinder Singh, resident of Mehatpur under Nakodar police station, is however still absconding, he added....

— *Indian Express,* May 18, 1987.

Gurdaspur, August 2, 1987 (UNI) — Punjab Roadways conductor Sarbjit Singh, who allegedly connived with the terrorists in the killing of four bus passengers on the Batala-Kahnuwan road on Friday evening, was trained at a terrorist training camp in Pakistan.

Police sources told UNI that Sarbjit Singh, who spent nearly 22 months in Pakistan, was one of the 106 extremists released after they surrendered to the police at the behest of the then ruling Akali Dal leaders in 1986.

The conductor, who was detained by the police disclosed during interrogation that he along with terrorists, Avtar Singh of Thatherke, Babbu and Gitta of Chinna village, had crossed the border on August 14, 1984.

Lodged in the Central Jail at Faislabad, Sarbjit Singh confessed that he met several terrorist leaders inside the jail during the course of his stay there.

He revealed that he along with Mohan Singh alias Moni of Patiala, Jaggi of Hoshiarpur, and one more person sneaked back into India and went straight to Gurdwara Gurdarshan Prakash at Chowk Mehta — the headquarters of the Damdami Taksal.

They met Avtar Singh in the gurdwara who introduced them to one Nirbhai Singh, the self-styled "General" of the "Khalistan Security Force". Motivated to cross over to Pakistan by Nishan

Singh of Naushahara Majha Singh village in Gurdaspur district, Sarbjit Singh disclosed that he surrendered to the police at the behest of a ruling Akali Dal leader on June 16 or 17. The sources declined to name the Akali leader instrumental in effecting his surrender.

After having been "debriefed" like other extremists who surrendered, he was released and given the job of a conductor in the Punjab Roadways on the recommendation of the then Gurdaspur Deputy Commissioner, the sources said.

The sources said the conductor not only kept his links alive with terrorists but also actively helped them in transporting men and firearms under his official protection.

Central intelligence agencies had then expressed their grave doubts about the large-scale surrender of terrorists and their subsequent release and rehabilitation by the then Akali Government.

The sources said had bus driver Jagir Singh not shown his presence of mind the terrorists could have killed more passengers. When asked to take the bus towards a desolate link road, the driver put the vehicle in the reverse gear knowing that it would bring the old and battered bus to a halt. The rickety bus could not be started without a push. As soon as the bus came to a halt, the driver jumped out spraining his ankle.

The terrorists who were armed only with revolvers and pistols, got panicky and opened fire on the fleeing passengers.

— *The Tribune*, August 3, 1987.

... three persons charged with harbouring and assisting Jinda and Bawa in their terrorist plans, were remanded in judicial custody until October 16.

Karam Singh Dhillon, a teacher of biology in Khalsa School, Dev Nagar, New Delhi.

RSS worker Ujagar Singh and Baldev Singh were arrested by the Patel Nagar police in Delhi last week...

The court granted B class to Karam Singh. The petitions of others for B class on the plea that both were graduates from Delhi University, has been fixed for tomorrow as the two failed to produce their degrees in the court.

— *The Tribune*, September 11, 1987.

New York, September 4, 1987 (IANS) — Sukhminder Singh Sandhu and Ranjit Singh Gill, who are being held here pending a hearing on their extradition to India, say they came to the USA on the orders of the leadership of the AISSF and used forged passport to get here.

In an interview, Gill asserted: "Our aim was to rally support for our cause in every way, emotionally and financially, and also to create a lobby within the Congress that would look into the persecution of Sikhs in India." He said they were chosen by the AISSF leadership to come to the USA because "we are educated, fluent in English and have friends here".

A request for the interview was made to the Federal Jail authorities, which consulted the prisoners and facilitated the interview which took place on Monday at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre, where they are being held in the high security wing.

The two men said they were ordered by AISSF President Gurjeet Singh to leave India since, they claim, their lives were in danger. They said the passports were arranged for them by the AISSF.

Sandhu (26), wanted in India for planning the August 1986 assassination of Gen. A.S. Vaidya, said he came to the USA in June 1986. Gill, also 26, and wanted for the 1985 murder of Congress(I) MP Lalit Makan, said he arrived in New York in February, 1986.

After arriving in the USA, the two said, they embarked on a tour of the country, talking informally to the Sikh community about the "problems in India". They were arrested at a petrol station in New Jersey by the FBI on May 14...

Jagjit Singh Mangat, President of the Sikh Cultural Society here, said that the Society, which runs a gurudwara, and other Sikh organisations, would help any Sikh fighting for the cause of an independent Sikh nation.

He denied any direct contact with the AISSF leadership but said he knew Sandhu and Gill by their names as they belonged to "respected well known families from Punjab". Gill's father, he said, was Director, Extension Education, at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana. His one brother was a psychiatrist in Virginia in the USA.

When interviewed Gill said he was an MA in plant pathology and working at PAU on the *viva voce* portion of his examination in July 1985, when he interrupted his studies to join the

'Khalistan' movement. He also said he had received admission at Kansas University as a doctoral student in genetics in the Autumn of 1985. That could not, however, be confirmed over telephone from the University.

Both Sandhu and Gill along with two other students of PAU were charged in 1984 with conspiring to murder the Ludhiana Superintendent of Police, S S Pandey. According to press reports in India the Justice Ajit Singh Bains Committee, in its report exonerated the four and said no such conspiracy existed. The police also subsequently modified its charges.

But the charges against them were not dropped by the CBI, the two men said. In July 1985, they decided to leave their homes and go into hiding. With anger and remorse in his voice, Gill said: "Our families tried hard to convince the Government to drop the case. We had written affidavits from Justice Bains saying that this was a made up case. Former Punjab Chief Minister Surjeet Singh Barnala personally gave us assurance that the CBI would drop it. But it never happened".

They said they were too busy with their studies all through the early 1980s to keep up with politics in Punjab. But the attack on the Golden Temple jolted them. Gill recalled: "I was doing lab work during the off-season in Shimla and then I left for Manali. Sandhu was also there. Then came the news that they had attacked the Temple and killed Sant Bhindranwale. Although we never were really his sympathisers, that really stunned us. We were standing on the streets and saw Hindus distributing sweets. Then they started taunting us. That day we decided we were not going to pursue studies but devote ourselves to the Sikh nation."

— *The Tribune,* August 3, 1987.

PART-III

Terrorists and Their Strategies

7. The Brain-Washing Strategy

The Amritsar district police chief, Azhar Alam, announced in March 12, 1987 the arrest of a fresh army recruit, involved in a terrorist killing and three suspected terrorists, including one of the three killers of the Khuddar incident in which eight persons were killed.

Addressing newsmen, he also announced the identification of the two terrorists who had shot at and killed a policeman while injuring three in the *parkarma* of the Golden Temple on March 7.

Alam said that army recruit Avtar Singh of Hoshiarpur posted in a unit somewhere under the Eastern Command was arrested a few days ago near Jandiala. He had killed one person in Rosulpur a few days ago and was associated with the "Khalistan Commando Force". His unit has been informed.

Alam disclosed that the terrorists have evolved a new strategy whereby they brainwashed any fresh army recruit visiting the Golden Temple while on leave to his home state after persuading him to stay on in the complex. Thereafter they would first send him to commit a robbery and then a killing, after which they would allow him to return to his unit, he added.

In the past two months seven to eight such recruits have been arrested. Three of them worked with the "Khalistan Army", one with the Babbar Khalsa and the rest with the "Khalistan Commando Force", Alam stated.

Terrorist Karaj Singh, involved in the Khudda killing, was arrested from Bhurakone village near Khemkarn. The two other terrorists involved in the killings escaped. The other terrorists arrested are Resham Singh of Chauthala village near Tarn Taran and Balkar Singh of Rurahsal near Khemkaran. One 303 rifle and two 12 bore pistols with about 40 rounds were recovered from them, Alam added.

The police chief also disclosed that some bodies had been recovered outside the city. Two of them were suspected to be police informers Kuldip Singh of Bhacanwali in Amritsar and Sukhwinder Singh of Warach village. He added that they were the ones who had helped in the arrest of Manjit Singh Bhindi, an "A" category terrorist.

These bodies were recovered from the outskirts of the city after interrogating some terrorists. These bodies had torture marks on them and it was understood that the victims had died of excessive torture.

According to the police chief, it had also been brought to their notice that one Kartar Singh, a newly recruited SGPC employee had been missing from inside the complex for the past 18 days.

— *Indian Express*.
March 11, 1987

8. The Motivation Factor

A case study of the recently arrested Sikh youths, terrorists in police parlance, has revealed that only 10 per cent of them are committed to the cause of "Khalistan". About 50 per cent take to the gun out of a spirit of "adventure" and the remaining 40 per cent are driven by sheer "poverty" to become outlaws.

Having been interrogated and detained, these youths, mostly marticulates, now await trial in law-courts — it is going to be a long wait, any way.

According to the SSP, Amritsar, Azhar Alam, even the hardcore terrorists were aware that Pakistan had taken them for a ride. But they felt that the "struggle for 'Khalistan' must continue". If the internicine war within the militants was any indication, he said, most of them could not afford to lay down arms and bid adieu to the underworld "for fear of being eliminated".

This mutual fear of death dissuaded them from quitting.

Reports of bank robberies and other crimes "thrill" the impressionable youths, who out of a spirit of "adventure" found ways to join the gangs. Their first "initiation" usually began with petty robberies. The gang chief gave some money. But it was the "thrill" that "graduates" them into killings. This sadistic pleasures and the "kick keeps them in the job".

Alam said the orientation of these innocent youths into the field of crimes was aptly summed up by a recent catch. To quote him: "The jail life seems to be much better than what I may have had even at the in-laws house, if I was married".

Fifty per cent of the youths was also well aware that even if caught, the chances of being thoroughly interrogated were 50 per cent. Because they could always get away by chirping out information, right or wrong, straight away.

To a pertinent question, Alam said that till the time the real identity of the arrested person became known, he went all out to "resist" answering questions. Thereafter, even the hardcore terrorists "break" giving clues and information, which was usually followed up to catch the others.

According to some police officials, who have had the occasion to interrogate the arrested youths, whether they belonged to any particular category or not, the word about some one being picked up spread quickly enabling the gangs to shift hide-outs.

The third category of the extremists were those who had been driven to violence out of sheer "poverty". Not having gone beyond matriculation and coming from large families, living below the poverty line, some of the youths were allured into the world of terrorists. There are known cases like that of Avtar Singh Brahma or for that matter Ranjit Singh Rana, both wanted by the police who, according to Alam came from poor families.

The financial position of some of them definitely improved later with the kind of crime committed by them. They then found it difficult to give up violence "because of access to easy money" he added.

Alam said there were exclusive "killer gangs". But their operations were, by and large, covered under the protective umbrella of 'Khalistan'. Several youths during interrogation admitted that "sodomy is not uncommon among them".

What has really intrigued the police is the "successful manner in which a small number of terrorists have created a fear psychosis". The magnitude of the fear generated over a period of time by these youths has often been described as "mind-boggling".

The sad part of the whole system, he said, was that the police was left alone to fight the terrorists, defend itself and face the enquiries also at times. "The nexus between the terrorists and the politicians is one major impediment on getting at the real ones".

— *The Tribune,*
March 12, 1987

9. Golden Temple — Hotbed of Terrorists

There have been alarming reports that terrorists might soon strike in a big way. There were also indications that the Golden Temple complex had, of late, become a hotbed of terrorism. It is reportedly being used as a "sanctuary". "Killer gangs" were reportedly sent from the complex to commit crimes.

This was stated by the Senior Superintendent of Police, Azhar Alam, in Amritsar on January 20, 1987.

According to him, the interrogation of some of the suspects rounded up from the complex has revealed that the terrorists were dressed in long robes of *Kar Seva* volunteers and were likely to use vehicles of the volunteers for indulging in violence.

Alam said during the day terrorists normally stayed in various inns, particularly Guru Nanak Niwas, where the fourth floor was being used as the main hideout. As the day advanced they moved into the *Parikrama* of Darbar Sahib taking shelter for the night in the rooms around it.

The police, he asserted, had definite information that at least nine top terrorists were at present taking shelter in the complex. The withdrawal of the task force after Gurcharan Singh Tohra was elected SGPC president, had also contributed to such developments, he added.

Threatening letters were sent and telephone calls were made from inside the complex to businessmen, traders and others several well-to-do citizens had given huge sums under duress. The extortion, he said, ranged between Rs 5,000 and Rs one lakh. In this game both terrorists and AISSF activists were involved. There was information that "killer and robber" gangs despatched from inside the complex usually reported back to their "masters".

Alam pointed out that the terrorists had stolen at least 50 long flowing robes belonging to some of the *sants* entrusted with the task of Akal Takht *Kar Seva.* A number of new *cholas* had also been got stitched.

Usually, vehicles marked, *Kar Seva* were accepted as belonging to well established *Kar Seva sants* of the district. There were, however, reports, said Alam, that at times terrorists forced the owners to give them these vehicles.

The police chief apprehended that armed with automatic weapons the terrorists, dressed as *Kar Seva* volunteers, could any day go to a busy market place on the pretext of making purchases and resort to firing.

In reply to a question as to why the police did not enter the *Parikarma* to arrest the terrorists who the police firmly believed were inside, Alam said: "If duty demands we shall go there also. The day I fail to do my duty, I shall quit".

He listed the following terrorists, who were present inside the complex: Karaj Singh, Gurbhaj Singh, Manjit Singh, Khajala, Kamaljit alias Kamba, Gurbachan Singh Paddri, Talwinder Singh Tibba, Jarnail Singh Mandiala and Satta of Pandori Mehma. "You can go and find these men in the *Parikarma* room numbers 45, and 39,48," he added.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that the police picked up a total of 60 persons from inside the complex during the January 17 police action. At least six terrorists were identified the same day and formally arrested. Out of the remaining only 11 were detained for "screening". The others had been let off.

— *New Age,*
February 8, 1987

10. A 'Parallel Government'

Here is an instance of how the 'parallel government' from within the Golden Temple was functioning before the President's Rule was imposed in Punjab.

This happened in March/April 1987. It relates to one of the border districts of the state. On checking, one *chakki* owner was found to be guilty of theft of power on a big scale. The S.D.O. concerned of the Punjab State Electricity Board — not a very honest officer — wanted to strike a deal. The *chakki*-owner refused. He was issued a notice to pay Rs. 18,000 or so.

He represented his case to the "Government" in the Golden Temple — one of the two factions of the A.I.S.S.F.

The S.D.O. was summoned. He complied. He was ordered that Rs. 18,000 should be paid to the Board not by the *chakki*-owner but the Board officials and a receipt in the name of the *chakki*-owner should be shown to them so that they knew that the order had been complied with. The rationale of this order was explained by pointing out that the Board officials were generally corrupt.

The S.D.O. called a meeting of linemen etc and told them that they must all collect the required amount to escape the wrath of the "Government". The amount was collected, though the S.D.O himself did not contribute even a paisa.

The receipt was shown to the "powers — that be". The latter were not satisfied. New orders were given. Now the demand was for one lakh rupees for buying weapons.

Another meeting was held. Advances were given to help raise the fund. Again the S.D.O. himself did not contribute anything. Only Rs. 35,000 could be raised.

The amount was sent towards the end of April 1987. It was accepted as the first instalment.

An interesting aspect of the whole matter was as to why the S.D.O. himself made no contribution himself. Some alleged that he has his own contacts with the terrorists.

Is it a true story or is it a joke going round certain circles in the PSEB? From a fairly reliable source it was learnt to be correct. Even if it were to be a joke, it would be a good indicator of the state of affairs that prevailed on the eve of the imposition of the President's rule in Punjab.

Has the President's Rule led to an improvement in the State? How are things in the Golden Temple now? It would be too early to answer these questions.

— *India Press Agency,*
June 6, 1987.

11. Bursting at the Seams

Overcrowding in jails was likely to adversely affect the Punjab Government's declared policy to wean "misguided youths" from the path of violence and extremism.

It was the presence of a large number of undertrials in jails which had led to overcrowding, giving an opportunity to "committed extremists" to motivate many of the undertrials booked for minor offences to join their ranks.

As a result of overcrowding, all attempts to keep certain prisoners from meeting or "socialising" with others had failed. This was happening despite the steps taken to segregate convicts and undertrials.

On an average about 30 to 40 undertrials were brought to the Central Jail in Amritsar every day. They were booked under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act and stayed in the jail up to nine months or so, the minimum detention period being not less than six months before being either bailed out or sent to some other jail.

According to the Superintendent of Amritsar jail, Rajendra Singh, the two years he had been there, there had been "no conviction" under the Act. His suggestion was that there should be a separate jail or judicial lock-up for undertrials. "This can be done either by building a new block here itself or setting up a new jail, say at Tarn Taran". In the same breath he, however, admitted that financial resources were a restraining factor.

The capacity of the jail was 999 but at present there were 1,559 inmates. The number of undertrials booked under the Act was 829.

At times the number of inmates rose further when Bangladesh nationals crossing the Indo-Pakistan border were nabbed and lodged in this jail.

There were four blocks of cells. As a rule, there was no solitary confinement any more. These cells numbered from 16 to 40 per block and measured 6 x 9 feet. Against the capacity of three, up to eight prisoners were herded together in each cell.

Undertrials, said the jail authorities, were allowed to keep writing materials. Censored newspapers were also made available to them.

The letters they sent home were usually censored. The undertrials had library facilities and were allowed to play certain games. The convicts work in the jail workshop or on the farm. The number of convicts in March 1987 was 579. The value of the goods produced by them in 1985-86 was Rs 15 lakh, while the farm produce fetched Rs 2.50 lakh.

Rajendra Singh said none of the jail facilities like corrective programmes and reformation or welfare schemes was open to undertrials. The exigencies of the situation had diverted the entire attention of the jail administration to beefing up the security arrangements. This was true of all seven Central Jails in the state. In addition, there were two high-security jails at Nabha and Sangrur, where hardcore terrorists were lodged.

Referring to the security set-up, Rajendra Singh said there were eight watch towers fitted with searchlights and manned round the clock by the CRPF, which was responsible for external security and vigil on the outer wall.

With the sanctioning of Rs 4.50 lakh, a 10-foot high barbed wire fence was being raised on the periphery of the jail. The Government had also sanctioned the appointment of 350 more warder-guards in various jails.

Rajendra Singh said the guards were armed with .303 rifles, while officials had small arms. Walkie-talkie sets were on the way.

The major drawback of the security system was lack of vehicles. There was not a single vehicle in the jail.

There was, according to the Superintendent, one company of the CRPF on guard duty. The company had heavy vehicles but no jeeps. In case of a jailbreak, there would be no vehicle to chase the escapees.

There had been reports of assault on the jail staff. At least three incidents took place in 1986 alone. Living under a constant threat had made the jail staff demand stronger security for them. There was also an acute shortage of housing accommodation for the staff.

— *The Tribune,*
March 27,1987

12. Would-be Terrorists Restored to Parents

The police on September 6, 1987 handed over two teenaged school boys to their parents, rather than booking them as terrorists on an assurance that the two would not be allowed to go astray again.

The two boys and their fathers, both ex-servicemen, were presented to newsmen by the Senior Superintendent of Police, Azhar Alam.

According to Alam, the two had run away from their homes and fallen prey to the terrorists inside the Golden Temple complex about a month back. While Pardeep Singh (14) was caught by the CRPF, the other boy, Narinder Singh (15), ran out of the complex out of fear only to be nabbed by the security forces on suspicion.

It was revealed by the boys, Alam said, that since fresh recruitment to the terrorist cadre had become scanty, under the changed *modus operandi,* the terrorists invariably lured young boys, in the age of 12 to 15 years, and used them for two tasks, namely, to act as "couriers" of arms and to become a "link" between the terrorists inside and outside the complex to enable them to exchange messages.

Even women, either widows or belonging to poor families were being used by the terrorists for the same purpose. For every trip from inside the complex, these boys and women were paid between Rs. 200 to 500, depending upon the nature of the task performed, he added. Since these people were held hostages by the terrorists, there was no escape for them.

The police had arrested at least four women "couriers". The SSP did not rule out adultery and sodomy.

From Pardeep Singh, the police recovered a letter written by Karaj Singh Thande alias Pehlwan, on the pad of "Bhindranwale Tigers Force of Khalistan", which was to have been thrown in the Chheharta industrial hub, where the terrorists had planned to kill innocent people to "avenge" the killings of Ranjit Singh Rana. The task was assigned to Pardeep Singh. "His other companion, probably carrying arms, however, escaped", the SSP said.

Pardeep Singh said he was a student of class X and belonged to Bhauli Inderjit village, near Batala in Gurdaspur district. He was disinterested in studies, so he "ran away" from his house a fortnight back and headed for the Golden Temple where he ran errands for the terrorists, who enticed him to act as a courier for them to carry weapons and messages.

On several questions when Pardeep Singh fumbled and faltered, the SSP came to his rescue. Pardeep Singh, for instance, was not sure who his companion was who managed to slip away when the CRPF intercepted the three-wheeler in which he was going to Chheharta, about four or five days back. The Superintendent of Police (Detective), Rajinder Singh, said Pardeep Singh was carrying the letter to be thrown after innocent persons were killed there.

Beant Singh, father of Pardeep Singh, is working in the CSD canteen at Batala. He said efforts to settle his son as a "minor mechanic" or in "tailoring" had failed. Pardeep Singh would not even tend buffaloes nor stay at home. He would not answer clearly why a police report was not filed when his son was found "missing". All he murmered was that the family was checking out with the other relatives. I was informed by a CID man last night about his arrest", he added.

Pardeep Singh looked confused and nervous.

Narinder Singh, the other boy, seemed more confident but was caught on the wrong foot when neither he nor his father Mehar Singh, could name the place in Madhya Pradesh where Narinder Singh was supposed to have gone on leaving his village, Jandiali. The SSP said that part could be left out as it was not relevant. Narinder Singh said he got Rs. 150 from his father to go to Madhya Pradesh.

Mehar Singh, who retired from the army in 1980, is working with the Punjab Roadways, Jalandhar. He was asked why he did not report to the police about his missing son, who like Pardeep Singh, was disinterested in studies.

Mehar Singh looked confused and said he was planning to send someone to Madhya Pradesh but would not say to which place. He said his son had taken the money to go there all alone but instead had gone to the Golden Temple.

Narinder Singh said inside the complex he was accosted by Kanwaljit Singh alias "Waheguru" who kept him in a room on the *parkarma*. He said he got scared when he was told to cross over to Pakistan for bringing arms. During his stay on the complex, Narinder Singh was taken by "Wheguru" to his village, Sarwali, near Dara Baba Nanak, for a night. He ran away three days back and was nabbed by the security forces on suspicion.

Alam said the "Khalistan Commando Force" was dominating the scene inside the complex and indulged in all types of "sexual exploitation" of men and women. The "Khalistan Liberation Force" did the same. "It is one up on the KCF. But the Babbars are clean and do not indulge in these things, he added.

— *The Tribune*,
September 7, 1987

APPENDICES

Appendix-A

The Naxalite Spillover

KANWAR SANDHU

There is no denying the fact that a few surviving Naxalites of Punjab had joined the current extremist movement in the state. But those who see too much in this are off the mark in understanding the present situation.

Only a few of the present-day terrorists are old Naxalites. They include Wadhawa Singh of Sandhwa Chatha village and Tarsem Singh of Kalasinghian village in Kapurthala district. In fact Nachattar Singh of Rode village in Faridkot district, who was an accused person in the Lala Jagat Narain murder case too was an old leftist. But there has been no evidence of any large-scale infiltration of Naxalites into the extremist groups operating in Punjab.

According to a study undertaken by the Punjab police intelligence wing, the Satya Narain Singh (S N Singh) group decided in July 1982, to infiltrate into the Akali agitation to "keep it going". Its leaders like Tara Singh Chalaki visited the Golden Temple complex but later they decided to withdraw for fear of being isolated from the leftist camp. Later some people from other groups (there are about 10 different left-wing factions) infiltrated into the Akali Dal. The intelligence wing identified 30 erstwhile left-wing extremists who later came to be closely associated with the Akali Dal. This included eight from the S N Singh group.

According to the study, the "defectors" other than those from the S N Singh group were from the Unity Centre for Communist Revolutionaries of India (three), CPI-ML (five), PPI(11), C P Reddy group (one), and undivided CPI-ML (one). Some field level workers too "defected" to the different groups owing allegiance to the Akali Dal.

The study however, makes one interesting revelation: most of the left-wing extremists "defected" not to the Sikh militant groups but to the Youth Wing of the Akali Dal. The President of the Youth Wing, Prem Singh Chandumajra, is one such "defector". As many as 18 of them were from the districts of Bhatinda and Sangrur. According to the study, the reasons for the "defection" include harassment by the police, influence of the family and religion and contact with the Akali leaders in jail.

There is some evidence that among those who helped the extremists regroup after Operation Bluestar were two old leftists, Mr Dalbir Singh and Mr Gajja Singh. The latter is now a member Presidium appointed as the front body of the "unified" Akali Dal announced recently.

Some of the present-day terrorists worked as bodyguards of Sant Jarnail Singh. This included Man Singh Kohar. They escaped arrest during Operation Bluestar because they were in their villages on the day. Activists of the Babbar Khalsa like Sukhdev Singh Dassuwal, Anokh Singh of Warring Suba Singh village, Sulakhan Singh of Verowal village and Avtar Singh Pahalwan, managed to slip out of the complex during the operation and later regrouped themselves.

The police records state that many others like Balbir Singh of Raipur village (Hoshiarpur), Ajitpal Singh of Hoshiarpur and Ranjit Singh Baba of Dyalagarh were motivated in the direction of extremism after the Army action in June, 1984, and the November 1984, riots in Delhi. But even here the ones already wanted by the police played a major hand. It is now learnt that the Delhi bomb blasts were the handiwork of a group which was operating from inside the Golden Temple complex before Operation Bluestar. Among those involved in the blasts was Anokh Singh of the Babbar Khalsa group.

Significantly, many of those who took to terrorism had been in the forefront of the national mainstream. Ajitpal Singh, for example was a "C" certificate holder in the NCC and had participated in the Republic Day parade in 1985. He was also the welter weight boxing champion of Punjab and had participated in the National Boxing Championships.

There has been a lot of controversy about those released by the Bains Committee taking to terrorism. There is only a partial truth in the allegation. In Amritsar and Gurdaspur districts the number of such cases is about 30 only and these include Manjit Singh Khajala and Satwinder Singh Bhola. Perhaps the maximum damage to the peace in the state has been done by those who escaped from police custody. These include Dalbir Singh Billa and four others who escaped from Gurdaspur jail two years ago.

There is a lot of evidence to suggest that unemployment led youth to terrorism. Tarsem Singh Kohad wanted to go to West Germany but did not get a visa. Interestingly, Kanwaljit Singh Kamba alias "General Sher Singh Sher" who was killed at Ratoke village recently, had met Surjit Singh Barnala more than once seeking a job. Earlier, he had surrendered before the Gurdaspur police after return from Pakistan. This was revealed by his associate, Satwinder Singh Bhola, during interrogation.

In most cases the terrorists belong to large families which have small landholdings. In almost all cases they are highly indoctrinated. Those who owe allegiance to the Damadami Takasal do not give up the visible tenets of Sikhism. Most of them, including the late Sukhdev Singh Sakhira, Gurbachan Singh Manochahal and Gurdev Singh (who was appointed jathedar of Akal Takht and later arrested) were well-versed in the religious scriptures.

The interrogation of a Babbar Khalsa activist, Avtar Singh Pahalwan is particularly revealing. He stated that he along with his associates Hira Singh and one Sukhdev Singh did not liquidate the Central Intelligence Inspector Gurmail Singh Bal as planned because when they reached his house to carry out the act he was seen reading the *Japji Sahib*. Though there are several instances of innocent bus passengers having been killed by terrorists, in many cases their victims continue to be those whom they accuse of committing sacrilege of religious places.

Most terrorists still sport long hair and flowing beards. Of late some exceptions have begun to be noticed. Police reports have it that one Balwinder Singh of Kapurthala district, who managed to escape from Kapurthala jail, was later seen in the Golden Temple complex without long hair.

There have also been recent examples of terrorists killing women, either to take revenge or to further the ends of their movement. The killing of women and children in Balbawa village and Tarn Taran are well known. During questioning certain extremists also revealed that when the hideout of some Babbar Khalsa activists was raided in Khilaria village near Jandiala (Amritsar district) in 1985 by the police, the terrorists later suspected one of the families in the village to have provided the tip off. They took away a boy and a girl of the family and killed them after questioning.

Some terrorists like Babla were working as smugglers earlier. In fact Babla started working for a smuggler in Ludhiana before he started doing smuggling independently. Similarly, Manjit Singh Bhandi (involved in the Khudda killings) was an associate of Satinderjit "PT", who was killed during the Army operation. "PT" was known to be an anti-social element and was openly reprimanded by Sant Jarnail Singh himself following some complaints in 1983-84.

Appendix-B

Women in Terrorism

In the past one year the police and para-military forces have held more than a dozen women, many of them not young, who have been abetting terrorist acts in different parts of the state. These women accomplices, according to police and intellgiene sources, mainly act as couriers.

According to an intelligence officer, most of these women hide the weapon in their trousers. Interrogation has revealed that besides weapons they also carry messages from one place to another.

Women involved in terrorist activity in Punjab also provide terrorists with shelter. In January 1987, there was a case of a young woman of Fatehubora village in Ferozepore district who had been harbouring three hardcore terrorists. Acting on a tip, a CRPF party visited her house. She denied the presence of any terrorist in the house. When the CRPF men wanted to search the house, she pulled out a revolver and fired two shots. Three terrorists hiding inside also opened fire. In the encounter that followed all the three terrorists were killed. The woman was arrested.

Police sources say that so far women terrorists have been active only in the border districts of Amritsar and Gurdaspur. Many of them are related to the terrorists of the area.

The two main underground organisations of women terrorists are the 'Mai Bhago Regiment' and the Girls' Wing of the Khalistan Commando Forçe (KCF). The 'Mai Bhago Regiment' is headed by Bhag Kaur, a self-styled 'general'. This organisation had owned responsibility for burning the Tricolour in the Golden Temple at the January 1987 militant-sponsored 'Sarbat Khalsa'. The girls' wing of the KCF is headed by Gurvinder Kaur who also calls herself a 'general'.

— *Indian Express*, **February 8, 1987**

Appendix-C

The Three Warring Groups

The Khalistani terrorists were divided in terms of trends into three distinct categories even when they were united. If before Operation Bluestar, they had a common umbrella of Bhindranwale's Damdami Taksal and the All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF), that cover just did not exist any more.

The first trend was represented by those who became victims of fundamentalism, revivalism and religious rigidity and thus turned into religious fanatics.

The second trend comprised the unemployed and the disillusioned youth who thought that the Khalistani terrorism would provide salvation to them from the rigours of present inequalities under the existing socio-economic set-up.

The third and the major trend consisted of the anti-social and criminal elements who found it lucrative to join the Khalistani movement as it had already given a big boost to increased anarchy, breakdown of the law and order and consequently massive smuggling, looting and other paying propositions.

After Bhindranwale's death, all these three trends came to the fore in a mutually conflicting position in the absence of a unifying force.

Contradictions and tension within the groups became so widespread that inter-group murders and clashes began. This split along with the attitude of the Pakistani authorities towards the Khalistani terrorists in Pakistani prisons and their isolation from the people led to desperation and disillusionment of many terrorists.

After the return of the Akali Dal to power and the attractive slogans of rehabilitation and other benefits given by the government, some youngmen who had turned terrorists due to rigours of unemployment and other problems, began to have second thoughts. So much so that many youngmen being trained in Pakistan ran away and came over to India. However, many trained terrorists fully committed to terrorism also crossed over to India.

The disillusioned youngmen returned to their village. The after effect of Operation Bluestar was also wearing thin. The terrorist hold had begun to wane.

The hard core terrorists saw the danger and they began to kill the youngmen who had returned to their homes. They were labelled as police informers. The anti-social elements having become predominant amongst the Khalistani terrorists, personal enemity and murders over looted booty and sex-related crimes increased.

The story of Gurmej Singh was not an isolated instance. Gurmej did have sympathy for the Khalistani terrorists. Terrorist leader Avtar Singh Brahma took away land forcibly from other peasants and gave that to Gurmej. In the course of his frequent visits to Gurmej's house, Brahma used the two daughters of Gurmej to satiate the sex-lust of his own and his gang members.

When Gurmej Singh protested, the enraged Brahma decided to finish him and his family completely. After forcing open the door, the terrorists, led by Brahma one time friend of Gurmej—coolly shot Gurmej four times. His wife was apparently trying to hide below the cot when a burst of bullets caught her. The bodies of the two daughters — 20 and 18, were slumped against the wall their hands folded in supplication. Obviously they were begging for mercy. The two sons were shot while lying on a cot. The guest was killed in another room.

The lady teacher, Mahinder Kaur, who together with her two daughters and another woman, was killed on almost similar grounds. Mahinder Kaur's son-in-law was with the terrorists led by Ranjit Rana alias Thiru. Rana was a regular visitor to Kaur's house. In the process, he became friendly to her daughter.... The girl's maternal uncle Jasbir Bhullar, an Army captain based in Chandigarh and a Punjabi short story writer, persuaded the girl to sever her connection with this gang... Bhullar took his niece to the comparative safety of Chandigarh cantonment.

In revenge, Rana first killed the son-in-law and then wiped out Mahinder Kaur's family except that girl. Rana was now gunning for Bhullar and the girl....

Jinda of Arjanpur in his testimony said, "I wanted to pull out from this heinous act (Muktsar bus carnage). But Tarsem Singh Kohar persuaded me to go along. In fact, with the help of my family I had a talk with the sarpanch of my village about my surrender to the police. The date for surrender at the Dhariwal police station was fixed. Somehow Kohar came to know of this. "He came to my house and threatened that if I nurtured any thought of deserting the ranks of the terrorists, my entire family would be wiped out. Sarpanch Harbhajan Singh was also threatened to be killed if he took any step for negotiating my surrender".

Jinda confessed that earlier he had thought of killing indiscriminately to achieve the glory of "heroism" like Wassan Singh, Kohar Singh and Waryam Singh Khapprianwali.

"Even if the government forgives me, the terrorists would never leave me alone", Jinda said.

A woman, Gurbinder Kaur, was also arrested along with Jinda. She too was an accomplice. She was the sister-in-law of Kohar. After the death of her husband, terrorist Jaswinder Singh Jagga in an encounter, she joined the terrorists.

In January 1987 at Mughal Chowk, 10 Khalistani terrorists led by Rana came to the farm house of Joginder Singh Bajwa, a retired police officer. Four labourers including a woman were killed there when they failed to say where Bajwa was. Not only that, the Khalistani terrorists poured kerosene over their bodies and set them on fire.

The reaction of the public to the killings of women and children in Punjab had been very sharp.

The killing of police officers, their families and others however fell in another category. These law and order men had gained knowledge about the terrorist groups, their hideouts and so on. Thus they were done away with and the killing of their families and children was to warn other policemen from following in the footsteps of the slain men.

But there was no doubt that the rift within the terrorists was spreading. Harminder Singh Sandhu had formed a group of his own. Some other terrorists of AISSF had also formed their groups. A few of these groups operated directly under the command of the Pakistanis. The Babbar Command was one such group.

— *New Age*, February 8, 1987

The rise and growth of terrorism in Punjab, its roots and linkages, are analytically surveyed and vividly portrayed in this important volume. The author lays bare how the terrorists and secessionists are sinning against Sikhism and demolishing the great edifice of secularism and human brotherhood so painstakingly built by the Holy Gurus in the course of four centuries or so. What is important is the insight with which the author discusses the projections working behind a terrorist's mind and what forces breed this social aberration. The book is further enriched with the inclusion of life sketches of nearly three dozen and more hardcore terrorists, not on the basis of hearsay, but prepared after thorough investigations and deep research and from first hand sources.

Satyapal Dang is a political writer much given to exploring the backwaters of our society and this, his latest work has much in it to set our society thinking. A candid scholarly work, with appendices containing very useful material from print-media, makes it a book of immense academic value of socio-political and historical significance, not only to research scholars and political scientists, but also to a lay reader.

SATYAPAL DANG, a veteran communist and reputed freedom fighter, is an outstanding working class leader of more than three decades standing. He was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly, and also was a minister in the United Front Ministry of Punjab.

His contributions mostly on current political affairs, and on Punjab in particular, appear in various journals and newspapers, which bear the imprint of Shri Dang's deep, penetrating and objective understanding.

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